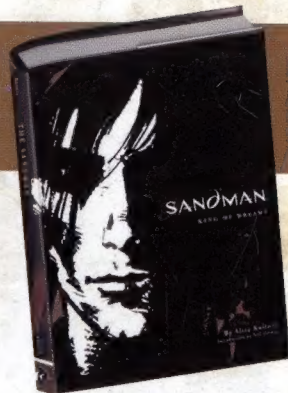


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Editorial 01273 566 222
fax 01273 566 333

(From North America replace first 0 with: 011 44)

345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Comics International is published every four weeks by Quality Communications Ltd and is printed by Scottish County Press (0131 663 2404).

Publisher/editor: Dez Skinn

dez@comicsinternational.com

Production: Lorian Luckings
loriann@comicsinternational.com

News: Mike Conroy
mike@comicsinternational.com

Listings: Jim Hannah

jim@comicsinternational.com

Research: Tim Pilcher

tim@comicsinternational.com

Assists: Carlie, Mark and Max

Print Liaison: Jim MacDonald

Subscriptions 01621 877 231

8 Galliford Rd, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD

Subscriptions Manager: Joy Flood

UK £21.50 (1st class) £18 (2nd class)

USA/Canada \$60 US (air) \$40 US (sea)

Mainland Europe/Eire £25/€50 (air only)

Australasia/Asia £40 (air) £25 (sea)

All are 12-issue rates. Single or back issues at 1/12th of above

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Insertions: 1 issue 6 issues 12 issues

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**A Quality
Communications
magazine**

#163 SEPTEMBER 2003

Inside this issue

COVER: With two new hardbacks looming, Vertigo's Sandman continues its popularity, a full seven years after the original series ended. Celebrating the *Sandman: King of Dreams* release, we're giving away 10 copies of the Titan book, all wrapped up in a Frank Quitely cover taken from his work in the October-shipping *Sandman: Endless Nights*.



News



NEWS INTERNATIONAL: Jim Lee moves from *Batman* to *Superman*... Thanos gets own Marvel title... 2000 AD publisher makes move on US... Conan debuts at Dark Horse... G.I. Joe writer launches space opera mini at Image... Manga series gives insight into Korean history... Bollywood comes to comics... Little White Mouse creator moves on to *Moped Army*... More mainstream book publishers enter manga market... plus much more... **4 CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Major publishers reveal new projects at San Diego and Chicago including *Sandman* writer reviving *Books of Magic*... Kurt Busiek's *Marvels* sequel... DC launches *New Universe* line of its own... Marvel to launch *Ultimate Fantastic Four*... *Night of the Living Dead* director to write DC horror title... Origin writer brings Wolverine story to an end... plus much more... **14 FRAME TO FRAME:** What's he got? Mike Conroy looks at Hollywood's love affair with horror meister Steve Niles and highlights a couple of the more unusual comic titles that have been picked up... **18**

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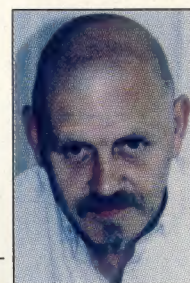
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Sez Dez



Editorial
Dez Skinn

I GENERALLY leave writing this column as late as possible. Not that I'm terrible with deadlines, but it's good to see what's in the issue first, to know what follows.

One friend recently commented that she was amazed I still retain such fervent enthusiasm about CI after 14 years of hands-on editing. But I do. *Talking Shop's* Stephen Holland remarked that I always seem to have a chuckle in my voice, which is probably true. I decided years ago to only do what I enjoy. And I still seriously enjoy editing this magazine.

A huge part of that enjoyment comes from you, our readers. An issue never passes without me laughing out loud at some of the outrageous things you, our columnists and our reviewers say in print. Such sections as letters columns may be considered outdated by most major US comics publishers, but I've always maintained that they are an integral part of any magazine I've had a say in. All the way back to *Fantasy Advertiser*, *House of Hammer*, *Starburst* or *Warrior*, I've been consistently proud of our readers.

OK, sometimes we've hit troughs, but certainly not this month. While we've only been able to publish a fraction of your input, the end product is once again unique. Nowhere else can you see the kind of commentary you've been submitting. The standard is truly excellent, and the variety, wit, intelligence and outright bluntness is nothing short of amazing.

It has been suggested that we lose all our reader interaction sections, the *Q&A*, *Letters*, *Comment*, *Classified* and, presumably, *Panel Beaters* too, in favour of more detailed and exhaustive news. Why else would you buy CI?

While it's true that the news is far and away the most popular section, isn't it true that the range of content helps?

Variety rules. From food to music, from television to comics... we all like a varied diet. And so we choose a product which fulfills our eclectic tastes.

Of course, the real trick is getting the balance right. So take a bow, readers, writers and advertisers. It's all of your varied contributions that help us meet our goal.

In my own ever-so-humble way, I think we're getting there and hope you won't begrudge spending an extra 25p so we can provide a better dish to serve it all up on. Shinier, sexier, smoother and cleaner. Tasty.

Comics International editor Dez Skinn's career in the industry spans 30 years. Titles he has created include *Doctor Who Weekly*, *House of Hammer*, *Hulk Comic*, *Starburst* and *Warrior*. Ex-editorial director of Marvel UK - where his Stan Lee-coined *Sez Dez* column had a monthly audience of over 500,000 - he has also edited titles including *Buster*, *Conan*, *MAD*, *Star Wars Weekly*, *2000 AD Presents*, *Rogue Trooper* and *Spider-Man* and won over 20 Eagle Awards. His co-created *Vendetta* is again optioned to Warner Bros. Yay!

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Top-selling Batman artist leads Superman overhaul



Above: Jim Lee and Scott Williams art to promote the changes planned for DC's Superman titles.

Jim Lee spearheads latest bid to boost interest in Last Son of Krypton with core titles make-over

DC IS gambling on fan favourite Jim Lee doing for Superman what he has already done for Batman.

When the former **X-Men** artist teamed up with writer Jeph Loeb for a 12-issue run on the Dark Knight's main title, the result sent their first issue [#608] screaming to the top of the sales charts where **Batman** has since been an almost permanent fixture.

100 Bullets

By getting Lee – and **100 Bullets** writer Brian Azzarello, who is to replace Loeb on **Batman** – to take over **Superman**, DC is looking to bring the same level of success to an icon who should be its number one hero but has constantly been outsold by **Batman** in recent years.

But, where the Loeb/Lee combo worked wonders on **Batman**, the increased sales were not reflected in an upswing of interest in the Dark Knight's other titles, a shortcoming which DC is planning to address with its latest Superman make-over.

Its across the board revamp of all three of the Man of Steel's core titles comes into effect in March. It not only brings Azzarello and Lee to **Superman** but

puts **Superman: Metropolis's** Chuck Austen and penciller Ivan (Lady Death) Reis on **Action Comics** while former **Batman** writer Greg Rucka – who has also recently taken over **Wonder Woman** – teams up with artists Matthew Clark, who worked with him on **Felon**, and Eudaemon's Nelson DeCastro on **Adventures of Superman**.

For his part, Rucka aims to focus more on Clark Kent the reporter where Austen's objective is to make **Superman** more street-level.

DC's President

Intending for the revamp to be more than a superficial change of creative teams, DC is also fleshing out the **Superman** supporting cast.

As part of this, DC's Lee-headed WildStorm imprint is to resurrect two DC heroes [see below]. These are to be transplanted into Metropolis where they will interact with **Superman** as a result of events to be depicted in a forthcoming mini, **Man of Steel: Lex Luthor**. Also written by Azzarello, it is being drawn by the writer's **Batman/Deathblow: After the Fire** collaborator, Lee Bermejo.

WildStorm to create family for Superman

THE QUESTION and **Vigilante** are to be revived as part of DC's **Superman** revamp [see main story, above].

The two heroes are being reinvented by DC's WildStorm imprint, which is to launch each into his own series.

Designated **SuperStorm** as in Wildstorm taking on **Superman** comics and characters, these spin off from the **Lex Luthor** miniseries. Seen as a way of expanding the **Superman** family of titles, they provide the Man of Steel with the beginnings of his own group of interconnected books comparable to **Batman's Robin**, **Nightwing** et al.

Offering a parallel, WildStorm head honcho Jim Lee said that – where **Gotham Central** depicts **Batman's**

home city from the police point of view – both **Vigilante** and **The Question** are to look at how criminals carry out their crimes in Metropolis, a city where a man can see through walls and hear you wherever you go.

Steve Ditko

The Question is written by **Aquaman's** Rick Veitch and drawn by **Batman: The Golden Streets of Gotham's** Tommy Lee Edwards [see art right].

It stars the character that **Amazing Spider-Man's** Steve Ditko created for Charlton back in 1967 [**Blue Beetle** #1]. His secret identity as TV journalist Vic Sage will provide the **Superman** link,

establishing that he is an old friend of the Man of Steel's wife, Lois Lane.

WildStorm is being intentionally obscure as to what connection, if any, its **Vigilante** is to have with the now-dead original introduced by Marv Wolfman and George Pérez in **New Teen Titans Annual** #2 [1982] – or with his female successor who debuted 10 years later. What is known is that the new guy's targets are to be white collar criminals. "The ones we all want to see brought to justice," as Lee put it.

Vigilante is drawn by **Robotech** #0's Carlos D'Anda and written by **StormWatch: Team Achilles'** Micah Wright, who describes the series as "dark comedy with lots of explosions."





A 288-page hardcover showcasing depictions of DC superheroes by the painter often dubbed the Norman Rockwell of comics is more than just a coffee table art book. Alongside reproductions of published work, *Pantheon's \$35 Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross* not only offers an insight into the artist's working methods via a wealth of unpublished sketches and the like [see the above unfinished Hawkman art] but also includes an original Superman/Batman story painted by Ross and written by Chip Kidd, the author and designer of the 9x12" volume, which ships in October.

Now chronicles battle for Korea's ancient 'Killing Art'

WESTERN readers can get a lesson in Korean history via a new addition to Comics-One's line of manga trade paperbacks.

Written and illustrated by Sung-Woo Park, *Now* is set 20 years after the fall of the Goguryeo Kingdom in 668 AD. Drawing heavily on the period between 57 BC and 668 AD, an era known to Koreans as the Three Kingdoms, the black and white series has the war between the two remaining kingdoms to unify the peninsula under one ruler as its background.

Now tells of a young man and woman who team up to prevent the legendary 'Killing Art', Sashinmu from falling into the wrong hands. The Art has resurfaced and a mysterious cadre is hellbent on seizing it from the handful of warriors who must destroy it if they cannot keep it safe.

Priced \$9.95, the 200-page *Now* volume 1 goes on sale in Waldenbooks and Borders in September and in all other outlets in December.



Megatokyo moves to Oregon



DARK Horse has obtained the trade paperback rights to a web comic that has already proven to be a best seller.

The Oregon-based company's acquisition of *Megatokyo* comes just weeks after an I.C. Entertainment/Studio



Ironcat collection of the Fred Gallagher [left] strip entered the top 50 on Bookscan's Adult Fiction Graphic Novels chart, which monitors sales in mainstream US outlets.

Heavily loaded with video game, anime and other pop culture references, the black and white Ameri-manga strip – which runs almost daily at megatokyo.com – tells of two Americans who can't afford to fly home from Tokyo. Stuck in Japan, they become involved in a series of offbeat adventures including getting entangled in a fantasy gaming scenario and saving Tokyo from devastation by rampaging zombies.

Dark Horse is to release its \$9.95 *Megatokyo* volume 2 in January and follow it up with a new version of the first book once the I.C. Entertainment edition goes out of print.



Above: The cover to I.C. Entertainment's *Megatokyo* trade paperback Chapter One; art by Fred Gallagher. Top right: A Gallagher character design.

Starlin back with Thanos

AFTER a 30-year career, a death-worshipping Marvel villain is to star in an ongoing series written and drawn by the man who created him

for 1972's *Iron Man* #55.

A constant in Jim Starlin's Marvel work across the past three decades, Thanos was a major player in the writer/

artist's *Marvel Universe: The End*. The villain's own title opens a few weeks after the conclusion of that recent six-parter, Starlin told CI.

"The Mad Titan is reevaluating his life and decides he's wasted most of it, seeking power and courting Death," explained Starlin. "So he decides he's going to become a good guy. Of course he's still Thanos so you can just imagine how well that's going to work out."

Thanos – which is inked by Starlin's regular collaborator, Al Milgrom – also features Adam Warlock, another character with whom the writer/artist acclaimed for the cosmic scale of his 1970s work is closely associated. "He happens upon Thanos shortly after his conversion and worries that the Titan could be more of a menace now than he ever has been previously."

Starlin, who said that Thanos is a monster trying to become a saint, is looking to give the series a dark yet humorous tone.

Thanos #1, priced \$2.99, ships on October 1.



Above: Jim Starlin and Al Milgrom's opening splash page from the first issue of Marvel's ongoing *Thanos* series.

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Gaiman opus examined

A FORMER Vertigo editor is taking an in-depth look at the *Sandman* phenomenon in a 176-page hardcover.

Alisa Kwitney's \$35 *The Sandman: King of Dreams* follows the September publication of DC/Vertigo's *The Sandman: Endless Nights*, writer Neil Gaiman's return to the mythos of his award-winning series. It is being released in the US by Chronicle in November.

But there is no waiting for British fans of the Vertigo comic. A UK edition of the 8x11½" *King of Dreams* is available now through Titan

Books, priced £24.99.

Predominately in colour, the book – a follow up to Kwitney's *Vertigo Visions: Artwork from the Cutting Edge of Comics* – features a wealth of behind-the-scenes material including input from Gaiman.

● Taking advantage of the publicity surrounding the release of *Endless Nights*, Gaiman's first *Sandman* work since 1999's *Dream Hunters*, Chronicle has also produced a *Sandman: King of Dreams 2004 Calendar* [see cover above]. Already on sale, it retails for \$12.95.



Closing *The Sandman: King of Dreams* is Michael Zulli's in-house poster [above] promoting *The Wake*. The 1995 three-parter ran in *The Sandman* #70-72 and led in to the series conclusion in #75.

Rebellion dips toe in US waters

THE LATEST in a series of attempts to market 2000 AD properties to a US audience is currently under way.

While previous tries were either licensed out or joint

ventures, this time the British weekly's publisher is going it alone. But caution seems to be Rebellion's watchword.

Even though the games developer-cum-publisher is

to incur no origination costs beyond new covers and will know its direct market orders prior to publication, it is restricting the launch of its US comicbook-sized line of reprints to just one title. This reduces the financial risk to an absolute minimum but it also leaves Rebellion all-but indistinguishable from the horde of owner-operated, single-title indies that also crowd Diamond's *Previews* catalogue in the section behind the pages occupied by the premiere publishers.

For its American foray, Rebellion is reviving a 1986 title launched as *2000 AD Presents* by Quality, which took over from Eagle, the UK-based publisher that initiated the repackaging of *Judge Dredd* and other strips for the US market in 1983.

The first four issues of *2000 AD Showcase* reprint Mike (Lucifer) Carey and Andy Clarke's *13* with *Wardog*, *Glimmer Rats* and *Cabalistics, Inc* to follow.

● It may be a reprint but, at a \$1.99 (£1.49), the series is at least 20% cheaper than other US adventure titles.



Above: Andy Clarke's cover art for the second issue of *2000 AD Showcase*, which is being relaunched by Rebellion on October 30.

G.I. Joe writer offers "space opera with a razor edge"

FRESH from writing the four-parter that kicked off Image's *G.I. Joe: Frontline*, Larry Hama is to launch a creator-owned six-parter he describes as "space opera with a razor edge and the nasty-metre turned up to 10."

Produced by Devil's Due for Image, *Oxido* is drawn by Weapon X: The Draft – Kane artist Pablo Raimondi.

Explaining the basic story to CI, Hama, acclaimed writer of Marvel's original *G.I. Joe* comic, said, "The meanest, evilest, baddest mother in the galaxy wakes up in the burning cockpit of a deep space frigate in the middle of a fierce firefight with two unknown space craft. He doesn't remember who he is."

"The crew – led by a stunning female marshal – convinces him that he is himself is a marshal, in fact the marshal in charge, because they need his skill and ruthlessness to survive. The tale spins from there," the writer concluded.

Oxido #1, priced \$2.95, ships on September 17.



Above: Pablo Raimondi's promo art for Image's *Oxido* six-parter.

the Drowners

by
Nabiel Kanan

episode one

A new four-part mystery
from the Eisner Award
nominated creator of
Lost Girl and Exit.



Brit blokes' books bounce back

PROVING that there's life outside of US mainstream superhero comics, three great British creators are making unique comebacks.

Eisner-nominated creator Nabiel Kanan returns with a new four-part miniseries, *The Drowners*. The story revolves around James Quinn, – a billionaire media tycoon whose empire is crumbling – and his possible involvement with the drowning of a woman years ago. Kanan has set up a publishing company, New Flame, bolstered by the success of his previous works, *Exit* and *Lost Girl*.

Another 20th century hero, Brett (Skreemer) Ewins, has two new collections out soon, the full-colour *Johnny Nemo Vol 2* – written by long-time collaborator Peter Milligan – and work in *The Dark Ages*. The latter is an anthology including scripts from other UK stalwarts Alan Grant, Alan McKenzie and Milligan. Ewins has also illustrated the bizarrely-named *Space Age Guitar and Bass Concept*, a "how to..." book, now available in music shops.

Continuing Britain's long

tradition exporting quality abroad, Ed 'Ilya' Hillyer's *The End of the Century Club* is to be published in Italy by Alta Fedelta. Renamed *Promissa Uscita (Last Exit)* the millennial saga has been updated.

One of the stars of *The Club*, Bic, is also being reprinted as *Skidmarks: The Complete Bic Cycle* by Richard Starkings' Active Images. The hard-to-find self-published Bic series, plus the mini from Tundra, will be collected with a new cover by Hulk: Grey artist Tim Sale.

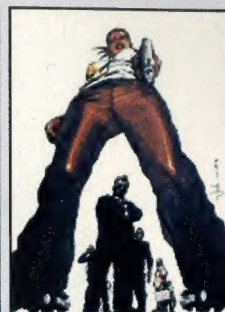
Recently described as "Tin Tin with stubble and a hard on," *Skidmarks* is the semi-autobiographical account of a bicycle courier and his constant battle with motorists.

The Comcraft spin-off Active Images is actively snapping up Tundra UK's old projects and republishing them for a whole new audience ten years on, having last month released David Hine's horror masterpiece, *Strange Embrace*.

The Drowners #1, priced \$2.95 and *Skidmarks: The Complete Bic Cycle*, priced \$10.95, both ship in November.

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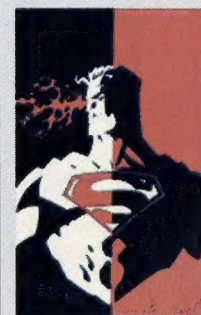
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Sword and sorcery hero in comeback

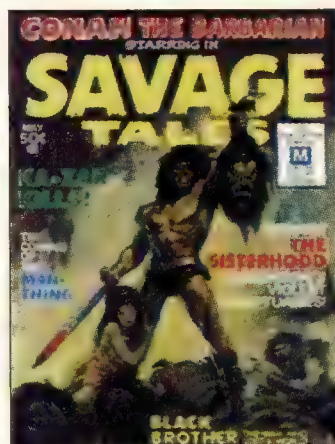
DARK Horse is readying the next phase of its plans for the seminal sword and sorcery character that Robert E Howard introduced in the December 1932 issue of *Weird Tales*.

Following the September 17 launch of its trade paperback series reprinting Marvel's 1970 *Conan the Barbarian* comic, the company is preparing to star the archetypal fantasy hero in his own new comic, his first since the licence was relinquished by Marvel in 1998.

Dark Horse has its simply titled *Conan* scheduled to premiere early in 2004. An ongoing series, it is being written by Kurt (Avengers) Busiek and drawn by Daredevil's Cary Nord [see art above] as is the 25¢ *Conan the Legend*, a one-shot which ships on November 12. A bargain priced introduction to the new monthly, it features a 16-page story together with a sketchbook and a short interview with the writer.

Busiek, who says he intends to remain faithful to the hero's history as chronicled by Howard, is to adapt the author's stories chronologically while filling in the gaps between. "We're starting off with the young

Conan, just after he leaves Cimmeria and heads out to explore the civilised lands. We'll be following him through his varied and violent career, as a thief, a mercenary, a soldier, a pirate and more."



EARLY in 1971, just seven months after his comics debut in Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian*, the sword and sorcery hero was the cover-feature on their magazine-sized *Savage Tales* #1; cover art [above] by John Buscema.

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Image top sellers seek independence

DEVIL'S Due is to become the third high profile producer to break away from Image Central.

Obviously hoping to emulate the solo success of **Transformers** publisher DreamWave Productions rather than follow **The Red Star's** Team Red Star into the shadows, the company headed by Josh Blaylock plans to begin publishing a line of titles under its own banner from January.

The move must come as a blow to Image which loses not only **G.I. Joe** – its top-selling title, outselling Todd McFarlane's **Spawn** – but also its spin-off, **G.I. Joe: Frontline** and **Voltron**, another licensed comic. All three do well for Image as

does another action figure tie-in – **Devil's Due's Micronauts**, whose license is not being renewed.

Explaining the motivation for the move, Blaylock said, "There are certain things that we want to accomplish, and certain things that we want to control that just aren't possible working under someone else. We need the control to be able to move faster on our own and be able to really brand ourselves."

While accepting the risk attached to losing the Image profile, Blaylock believes it to be marginal. He not only has confidence in the **G.I. Joe** brand but also cites such companies as CrossGen, DreamWave and Oni as examples of successful indie publishers.

Futuristic moped army gets mobilised

PAUL Sizer is looking for a complete change of scene while he takes a break from his critically acclaimed **Little White Mouse** series.

The writer/artist plans to go from the outer space setting of his **Blue Line** Pro title to Earth in the year 2277 with his **Moped Army**. This is a dystopian vision of a future where petrol is illegal and an underclass struggles for survival while living below the new cities that have been built over the old.

Sizer, who is currently developing his graphic novel for publication late next year through his own **Cafe Digital Comics**, says the inspiration for the story came from the real life **Moped Army**.

This nationwide US organisation of moped owners has



its origins in his home city of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

"The Moped Army is the epitome of the vision that William Gibson had for the future in his writings about the cyberpunk culture," he said. "They embody a very pure essence of punk culture, in that they make what makes them different their strengths."

Manga draws in two more book publishers

THE JURY is still out over whether the American public's interest in manga will translate into a real demand for comics in general but it is for certain that its appetite for the Japanese material has yet to be sated.

Despite an increasing array of titles from Viz, TokyoPop, CPM Manga and other such established manga

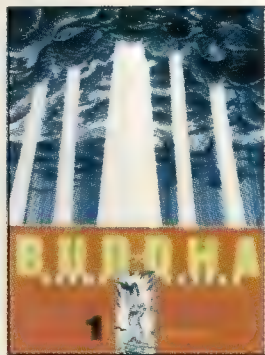
publishers, a growing number of mainstream companies is entering what seems to be an insatiable market.

Following the recent Random House announcement that it is to publish Kodansha titles under its Del Rey imprint, two newcomers have revealed plans for their own manga lines.

Vertical kicks off in October with **Kapilavastu** [cover left], the first of the eight volumes in **Astro Boy** creator Osamu Tezuka's **Life of Buddha**.

The 400-page hardcover is priced \$24.95 as is the second volume, which follows in November, the same month that Broccoli ships the first \$9.99 book in its 5x7¼" **Di Gi Charat Theater** series [cover right].

It stars the cute but mean mascots for Gamers, a



Japanese retail chain owned by the fledgling publisher's parent company and puts Broccoli head-to-head with Viz and Studio Ironcat, which both publish **Di Gi Charat** titles in the US.

Broccoli has two other series lined up, **Galaxy Angel** and **Juvenile Orion**, but both are unscheduled.

Slave Labor comic gets Bollywood feel

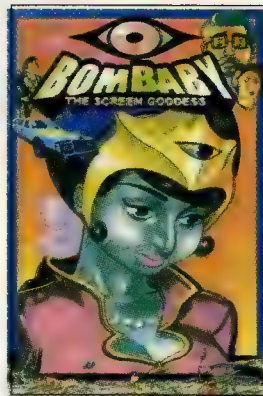
THE INFLUENCE of the world's largest film industry is becoming increasingly pervasive in Western culture with such major establishments as leading banks and the BBC using recognisable elements from Indian movies in their advertising.

Although it would be all-but impossible to transfer the important song and dance aspects of these films to comics, newcomer Antony Mazzotta intends to bring the Bollywood spectacle and style to a four-parter he says is a story he needs to tell; "It is the product of where and how my life has guided me."

According to the writer/artist, **Bombaby** tells of a young heroine on a journey of self-discovery.

Published through Slave Labor Graphics' Amaze Ink imprint, the mini focuses on Sangeeta Mukherjee, the daughter of well-to-do, traditional parents, who is trying to cope not only with a bratty younger sister but also the possibility of an arranged marriage. Then an out-of-body experience reveals she is India's ancient protector, the Goddess of Mumbai reincarnated.

Now she must decide if she should use her new-found



power to make a difference in a male-dominated society. But whatever her choice, she must defy tradition to lead the life she wants and discover her true self.

Subtitled **The Screen Goddess**, the quarterly 24-pager is priced \$3.50. It launches in November.



AFTER the abject failure of **Recharge**, Marvel has elected to leave the collectable card game game to the experts and has licensed the producer of the hugely successful **Yu-Gi-Oh!** game to handle future CCGs. Shown above is promo art for Upper Deck's **Marvel Trading Card Game**, which launches in November. It will be available in 55-card starter sets complemented by nine-card booster packs.

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Conventions bring nothing new to set

Newcomers alongside seasoned pros lined up for forthcoming projects, but little originality promised in flood of titles announced by Marvel and DC

THIS year's convention season brought with it the traditional spectacle of the major publishers parading their new projects.

However, although San Diego's Comic-Con International continues to be a mecca for the both the comics and the film industry, it is in danger of being overshadowed by the multimedia razzle-dazzle that is the Wizard World Chicago extravaganza.

This danger is highlighted by Marvel choosing to announce virtually nothing in San Diego, apparently on the basis that, like *Wizard* itself, the Chicago fest attracts a younger audience and that remains its preferred market.

But while Marvel was possibly hoping to spike DC's guns at WizardWorld, believing its main rival had shot its load in California, DC had kept more than enough in reserve for the Chicago crowd.

Gaiman's back

Most notably, DC revealed details of its previously announced plans to revamp its Superman titles [see lead story, page 5]. The latest in a series of major make-overs that dates back to 1971's



Above: Robin by Rick Mays, who joins writer Bill Willingham as the new creative team on the Batman sidekick's own title with the December-shipping #121.

Kryptonite No More! storyline and includes John Byrne's 1986 reconstruction of the Man of Steel mythos, it was hardly likely to inspire fans, but then no single project promoted at either convention seemed to generate much buzz, either among attendees or subsequently on the Internet.

Neil Gaiman's return to monthly comics should have been enough to elicit some excitement, but Vertigo failed to create a stir when it added that *The Sandman* writer would only be plotting the relaunch of *The Books of Magic*. *Eastenders* writer

Si Spencer is set to script.

Discussing the project, which is lined up to premiere early next year, Gaiman said he wanted to get the series back on the rails and give it some point and a direction that was consistent with the original miniseries. "Something that wasn't about Tim learning magic any more. Something more about why he was learning magic, and what this was leading up to.

"And being allowed to set it in the near future means we can do a lot more damage on the way..." he added.

Marvels II

As with Vertigo and *Books of Magic*, Marvel's statement – that Kurt Busiek is writing a sequel to 1994's hugely popular *Marvels* four-partner painted by Alex Ross – failed to live up to fan expectation when it was revealed that the painter is absent from the project.

The six-issue *Marvels: Eye of the Camera* is to be drawn by *Aria*'s Jay Anacleto and digitally coloured by Brian Haberlin.

Beginning between issues #1 and 2 of the original mini, the story swiftly moves to cover events in the Marvel



HAVING already put his own unique spin on *Blackhawk* and *The Shadow*, Howard Chaykin is set to reinvent the *Challengers of the Unknown*, the 1957 DC combo many consider to be Jack Kirby's prototype for the *Fantastic Four*, which appeared almost five years later. This time, however, Chaykin is discarding the originals in favour of a completely new cast. Shown above is his promo art for the *Challengers of the Unknown* series, which the *American Flagg!* creator is writing as well as drawing.

Universe – as again seen by photographer Phil Sheldon – from 1973 through to a period shortly after *The Fall of the Mutants* saga. It is to focus on the heroes and the changes they go through rather than taking its prede-

cessor's approach of classic moments in Marvel history.

Secret Wars

"I'm more concerned with making sure we see things like the rise of the Punisher and Wolverine and the new X-Men, the darkening of Daredevil, Bullseye and Elektra, Phoenix, the Avengers at some of their various peaks through that period, and so on. There's a couple of Secret Wars, plenty to do with Spider-Man, the FF in the news... but it'll be the events that resonate with Phil's life more than a laundry list of the big stuff," explained Busiek, who also had *The Dark Ages* confirmed as his next *Astro City* project.

Ironically, according to the writer, the WildStorm 12-partner is the story he planned for a previous, aborted *Marvels II* project reworked to fit the new milieu. Drawn by *Astro City* regular Brent Anderson, it should launch early next year, possibly clashing with the release of *Eye of the Storm*.

Another WildStorm title could have got the DC imprint a wackiest concept award. *Superman/Thundercats* is a 48-page one-shot which editor Scott Dunbier suggests should be subtitled



Zombie nails Dark Horse with Niles

THE UNDEAD dominated Dark Horse's San Diego announcements in more ways than one.

First up was Rob Zombie, who is set to have a second crack at comics with *The Nail*.

Fresh from setting up his five-issue *Spook Show International* anthology to launch in October as a Code 6 title from CrossGen/MV Creations, the outrageous rocker – who was co-founder and lead singer with White Zombie – is to team up with *30 Days of Night*'s Steve Niles to co-write the series. It tells the story of a bunch of satanic bikers and all the mischief that type of group can get into on any given day.

No artist is yet attached to the comic, which is lined up to premiere early next year.

A slightly more traditional version of a zombie is the star of a series by relative newcomers Kevin Munro, Dave Wilkins and Tony Washington.

Also scheduled for early 2004, *El Zombo* [promo art left] stars a professional wrestler who comes back from the dead to protect a little girl.

The third of Dark Horse's announced projects covers slightly more familiar ground. Set to debut next summer, *The Underground* is written and drawn by Michael Davis.

The co-founder of Milestone Media – which published such *Dakota Universe* titles as *The Blood Syndicate* and *Static* through DC in the mid-1990s – Davis intends to tell a fictional untold history of black superheroes from the 1600s to five years in the future.

world on fire

Not Ridiculous. Lined up for the end of the year, it reunites the **Teen Titans/Young Justice: Graduation Day** team of Judd Winick and artists Ale Garza and Trevor Scott.

The Twilight Experiment follows about a year later. The **WildStorm** six-partner is by **21 Down** writers Jimmy Palmiotti and Justin Gray teaming up with Juan Santacruz – who worked with them on **The Resistance** – for the story of an 18-year-old who has been stranded on a space station since he saw his mother die when he was 10.

"Eight years later he arrives on Earth, a stranger in a strange land looking to start a new life only to discover that the man who killed his mother is not only alive but has taken control of the planet," explained Gray who, together with Palmiotti, is also writing a DC Universe title drawn by **Howard the Duck's** Phil Winslade.

Beastly streets

Monolith – a contemporary series that opens in the 1920s – features a creature created from the streets of New York. It premieres in December.

Among other DCU titles in the pipeline is **I Can't Believe it's not the Justice League**. Lined up for next year, this sequel to the current **Formerly Known as the Justice League**, is

by the same team of writers Keith Giffen and J M DeMatteis and artists Kevin Maguire and Joe Rubinstein.

Nyuk, Nyuk

"Guy's back and they're going to Hell," explained Giffen when discussing the follow up. "Other than that it's the same 'nyuk nyuk' in lieu of plot."

Also scheduled for next year is **Batman: Harley & Ivy**, a **Batman Adventures**-style three-partner written by Paul Dini and illustrated by Bruce Timm.

On the stars of the long-awaited project, Dini said, "They're contrasts to each other, which makes them an interesting pair. It also leads to some stress between them as there are times when the more serious-minded Ivy just does not want to know from Harley and her wacky antics. Harley can tend to get on Ivy's nerves and we see ample evidence of that in the miniseries."

Another title in the same style is a tie-in with Cartoon Network's recently launched **Teen Titans** series.

Powerpuff Girls

Launching in November, **Teen Titans Go!** is written by **Sidekicks'** J Torres with art by the former **Young Justice** team of Todd Nauck and Larry Stucker.



Above: The regular cast of *The Shield* as depicted by newcomer Jean Diaz, artist on IDW Publishing's first spin-off from the award-winning TV series. Written by Jeff (Desperadoes) Mariotte, the five-issue **The Shield: Spotlight** premieres late this year, priced \$3.50.

"It's the Wolfman/Perez **Titans** for a generation of kids whose cartoon heroes are the **Powerpuff Girls** and the **Dragonball** gang," Torres explained. "But there's plenty to enjoy for those of us who grew up on the **New Teen Titans** comics who are still (ahem) young at heart. We're designing the comic in the same all-ages, fun for the whole family, style."

When in Rome...

Another regular DCU project in the pipeline is a Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale six-partner that explains where Catwoman got to when she disappeared from 1999's **Dark Victory**, the writer/artist team's earlier 13-issue **Batman** series.

"She's as close as I can get to the wit of the actresses in the '30s and '40s. Those women could be sexy and still smart. They could wrap men around their fingers and still fall hopelessly in love. At the end of the day, Tim and I are dopey romantics and that's how we see Selina. Ruthless... but romantic," revealed Loeb, who added that he likes her 'voice' and Sale just loves to draw Catwoman.

Like most of the projects announced at the conventions, **Catwoman: When in Rome** is lined up to premiere in 2004.

Post Year One

DC also announced a **Batman** graphic novel by current **Catwoman** writer Ed Brubaker and **Preacher** co-creator/artist Steve Dillon.

Set immediately after the events chronicled in **Year One**, Frank Miller's classic

1987 retelling of the Dark Knight's origin in **Batman** #404-407, the new **Batman: The Man Who Laughed** tells of the Joker's first appearance in Gotham.

Commenting on the story, the writer very concisely explained, "A guy [the Joker] with a sniper rifle comes to

continued overleaf



Heaven's War and Death for Image

LIKE **Dark Horse** [see sidebar facing], **Image** presented only a handful of new projects at San Diego.

Among them was **Sei** [art above], a 64-page graphic novel which ships in December.

The work of Japanese writer/artist Sho Murase, it features stories inspired by the myths of the Shinto, the indigenous faith of Japan. The title, which is also the name of the main character, means Death in Japanese.

Also set for late this

year is Micah Harris and Michael (Alias) Gaydos' 100-page **Heaven's War**.

This follows the **Inklings** – authors C S Lewis, J R R Tolkien and Charles Williams – as they race to intercept Aleister Crowley at the Gates of Heaven and save reality as we know it.

Andrew Stephenson and Trevor Goring's **Waterloo Sunset** is now planned for 2004, set in a 'strange future London' where the people are reverting to mediaevalism.



Above: Penciller Claudio Castellini and digital colourist Richard Isanove collaborate on art for Marvel's **Wolverine: The End**

Bits and Pieces

JILL Thompson is to feature other members of the Endless family in follow-ups to her manga-esque **Death: At Death's Door** graphic novel.

KABUKI'S David Mack is to co-write **Ultimate X-Men** #46-50 with the series' current writer, Brian Michael Bendis, prior to replacing him on the Marvel title with #51.

CLIFF Chiang is to illustrate the second story arc in Peter Milligan's **Human Target** for DC/Vertigo.

CARLO Barbieri takes over as regular penciller of the revived **New Mutants** with #7.

CHRIS Claremont and John Byrne's upcoming six issues on **JLA** will lead into a new series by Byrne, who also has a fourth **Generations** project in the works.

The **STORM** mini drawn by Igor Kordey is to be published across four 40-page issues of **X-Treme X-Men**, which will ship weekly in January.

DESPITE very late shipping on volume two, Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill are working on a third **League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** mini for America's Best Comics. Set in 1910, it will feature only Mina Harker from the established cast.

ALAN Davis is developing **JLA: Another Nail**, a sequel to his **JLA: The Nail** mini.

SALVADOR LaRocca begins his stint as regular **Uncanny X-Men** penciller in January. His inker is Danny Miki, who worked with him on **Ultimate Daredevil/Elektra**.

DC has abandoned plans to revive Tower Comics' **T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents**.

HATE! creator Peter Bagge's follow up to **The Megalomaniacal Spider-Man** is to be the as-yet unscheduled **Incorrigible Hulk**.

A **GHOST Rider** project is being developed by Marvel.

PHIL Jimenez is writing and drawing **Otherworld** for Vertigo. Asked about the 12-issue series, the writer/artist said, "Wizard described it as *Real World* meets *Lord of the Rings* meets *Tron*, and really... that about nails it."

WITH its legal wrangles with Top Cow behind it Michael Turner's Aspen Entertainment is forging ahead.

The fledgling publisher has inked a deal with DC which will see Talent Caldwell, the **Fathom** creator's protegee, drawing a six-issue **Superman** series as well as Turner himself working on a DC Universe project.

continued from page 15



Gotham City and whacks the mayor."

Also in the pipeline is **Batman: Jekyll and Hyde**, a six-parter which reunites the **Inhumans** team of writer Paul Jenkins and penciller Jae Lee.

Discussing the premise for his story, which compares Batman's psyche with that of his schizophrenic nemesis Two-Face, Jenkins said, "Batman is two people in conflict just like Two-Face."

The writer also has a Marvel mini in the works.

Wolverine's end

Lined up to launch later this year, **Wolverine: The End** appears to have superseded **The Last Wolverine Story**, Joseph Harris and artist Enrique Breccia's own much anticipated story of the fan-favourite X-Man's last days.

Jenkins, who also told of Wolverine's early days in the highly successful **Origin** mini, is joined on the six-parter by **DC vs Marvel** penciller Claudio Castellini.

Ultimate Four

Marvel also announced the latest addition to its line of



Above: A Michael Gaydos interior page from **Heaven's War**; a 96-page Image graphic novel. Top: Andy Kuhn interior art from Epic's **Young Ancient One** three-parter.

Ultimate comics.

Appropriately, **Ultimate Fantastic Four** is the fourth book in the series, joining **Ultimate X-Men**, **Ultimate Spider-Man** and **The Ultimates**.

The title is scripted by Brian Michael Bendis over Mark Millar plots. Joining the writers – who share the existing titles between them – is former **Ultimate X-Men** artist Adam Kubert.

Space race

Launching in December, this title provides Marvel's first family with an updated origin.

"Rereading Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's classic origin issues I was struck by how tied to the space race the concept is," explained Bendis. "Sue even states that their mission is important because they couldn't let the commies beat them to the moon."

"That climate doesn't exist any more," he added. "That reasoning doesn't exist any more – and so, after a great deal of thought, that's one of the two main changes we've made to the core concept. Their powers are naturally the result of an accident, but we've tweaked the motivation and the details of the accident somewhat."

Epic unknowns

At the other end of the scale, Daniel Way is to shine the spotlight on Marvel's smallest hero in **Ant-Man**, a four-part MAX series, which is being digitally painted by Clayton (Universe) Crain.

Way is the writer of **Gun Theory**, one of the first titles published by Epic, a Marvel imprint that made a few announcements of its own.

It has four titles already



Above: Steve Lieber interior art from **Sanctuary**, the second in writer Max Collins' trilogy of prequels to **The Road to Perdition**. Below: A Jay Anacleto double-page spread from **Eye of the Camera**, the six-issue sequel to writer Kurt Busiek's **Marvels**.



lined up for next year, mainly the work of newcomers.

Rob Worley and Andy (Firebreather) Kuhn's three-issue **Young Ancient One** is set in Medieval Tibet. It tells of the early life of Dr Strange's future mentor.

An as-yet untitled one-shot provides Heath Amodio with the chance to look at what might have happened to Spider-Man if Peter Parker's Uncle Ben had not been murdered while **The Northwood Saga** is a sword and sorcery project by Marc Campbell.

Furthest along is **Strange Magic**, which writer Jason Henderson describes as "a sexy, stylish comicbook about the enigmatic Sofia, a sorceress hiding out from the Marvel Universe in New Orleans. She's 17 years old and has been on the run for years, and she's come to the most Haunted City in America to stop running and become 'high sheriff of spookytown'. But even as she starts helping people, she's under intense pressure to hide from the hero community for reasons she won't reveal."

The Epic series is drawn by Greg Scott, the writer's collaborator on Image's forthcoming **Sword of Dracula**.

George Romero

Perhaps the most intriguing project announced was Toe

Tags, which brings together George Romero and Cage artist Richard Corben.

Written by the director of the 1986 cult favourite **Night of the Living Dead**, the DC horror series is a six-parter.

New Universe

Also announced by DC was **Focus**, a line of comics which sounds similar to Marvel's aborted mid-1980s **New Universe** series, being set on an Earth where superpowers are only now coming into existence.

It launches in February with **Touch** by John Francis Moore and Wesley Craig, Kelley Pluckett and Warren Pleece's **Kenetic**, **Hard Time** by Steve Gerber and Brian Hurtt, David Tischman and Timothy Green's **Fraction**.



Above: Greg Scott character designs for Epic's **Strange Magic** project.

Unknown has hit

IT FAILED to get into the Diamond Top 50 Graphic Novels chart when it was published by Pantheon in April but Marjane Satrapi's **Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood** is yet another example of the increasing importance of mainstream bookshops to the comics industry.

The 160-page hardcover – which has been compared favourably to Art Spiegel-

man's Pulitzer Prize-winning **Maus** by the influential **New York Times** – has already sold in excess of 35,000 copies and could conceivably become 2003's best-selling graphic novel.

Priced \$17.95, it tells of a young girl growing up in a radicalised bourgeois household in Tehran during the tempestuous decade that saw the fall of the Shah and the brutal war with Iraq.



IDW gets own superheroes

MARV Wolfman and Len Wein are bringing a superhero team to a publisher better known for its horror and crime titles.

Between them, if not individually, the pair wrote just about every major DC and Marvel hero during the 1970s. Although still peripherally involved in comics, both have made a move into screenwriting and **Gene Pool** is a prequel to a film they have in development with Helkon Media, Tri-Pictures and Eagle Pictures.

Offering background on the idea that he and Wein are telling, a realistic science fiction/adventure story set in the modern world, Wolfman explained that their Doctor Truman Chase has been experimenting on children dying from genetic disorders.

Chase has been genetically altering them, looking for a way for humanity to survive in a world he believes will become uninhabitable as a result of pollution and the destruction of the ozone layer. "Many of his experiments died, but others did find themselves altered."

"Those are what Chase calls his Gene Pool. The movie is the story of several of these people who, prior to two weeks before the film, had never met. Now they are being hunted for reasons you'll have to see the film in order to learn."

"The graphic novel is about the two weeks prior to the movie story," he added.

IDW's \$6.99 **Gene Pool** oneshot is drawn by newcomer Steven Cummings. A 48-pager, it ships in October.



Now resurfaces

TONY Caputo is reviving the publishing company best-known for such licensed titles as **Green Hornet** and **Married with Children**.

Founded by Caputo in 1986, Now Comics closed down in 1994, a casualty of the recession that hit the industry in the mid-1990s.

The resurrected company kicks off on October 3 with a 400-page **Ralph Snart Adventures** trade paperback. Written and drawn by Marc Hansen, the \$24.95 volume collects all the issues of the first title ever published by Now Comics.

The compilation is to be followed by Caputo's own black and white **Vespers**. This was inspired by, among other things, Stan Lee's **Origins of Marvel Comics** statement that he was going to create a superhero "with feet of clay", the writer/artist told CI.

Stressing that the 100-page graphic novel was not about a superhero group but a support group for the extraordinary, Caputo added, "Realistically speaking, if something like the Fantastic Four's Thing walked down the street, people would run screaming. The last thing they would do is consider that person a 'hero,' no matter what his abilities were or what he tried to do. It's human nature."

Caputo is also planning to resuscitate Now's **Fright Night** title, which was based on the 1985 movie and the subsequent TV spin-off.

Currently unscheduled, as is **Vespers**, the **Fright Night** graphic novel is by Caputo and Neil Vokes, who drew the 1992 series for Now.

● Now gave Alex Ross his first professional assignment, illustrating 1995's **Terminator: Burning Earth** mini.

CI #161 competition winners

IN CI #161, ten readers were offered the opportunity to each win one of the two-disc **Daredevil** DVD boxed sets. The lucky winners were:

Alice Watts, Brighton
M Rees, Kingston-on-Thames
L Mendes, Putney, London
R McGibbon, Ilkley, Yorks
Don MacDonald, Glasgow

Richard Elliott, Chelston
G. Maghull, Maghull, L'pool
Patrick Coyne, Leeds
Miss P. Alldritt, Wednesfield
B Johnson, Hackney, London

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of CI #158 as:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 News International (22.8%) | 6 Comment (6.1%) |
| 2 Reviews (15.6%) | 7 NetWorks (5.7%) |
| 3 Advance Listings (7.2%) | 8 Letters/Comic Cuts (5.3%) |
| 4 Daredevil competition (6.4%) | 9= Sez Dez (4.4%) |
| 5 Q&A (6.2%) | 9= Talking Shop (4.4%) |

...a great start for Stephen Holland's Talking Shop on its first appearance.

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was again "None, they're all fine" – very encouraging at 24.4%, with Novel Graphics second at 15.3% and Comics Economics third at 14.1%.

In Brief

DREAMWAVE has another ongoing **Transformers** series in the pipeline.

The Canadian-based indie's founder, Pat Lee said the new comic – a **G1** title – could feature some of the Japanese-only characters previously seen by US fans only in anime dubs. No further details were forthcoming about the comic which is being lined up for a January launch.

GEN¹³ is being cancelled for a second time.

The current Chris Claremont-written series is to end in December with #16, which is to feature the return of the original team as demanded by WildStorm.

Commenting on the editorial directive, the writer said, "The new **G1** isn't setting the sales world on fire. WildStorm decides to shut the book down, which will happen with #16. Final arc, mandated from On-High: find and resurrect the original team. End of story."

IT'S TO be a new year and a new writer for **G.I. JOE**.

Newcomer Brandon Jerwa – whose first professional work was on the just-released **G.I. Joe: Frontline** #11-14 – is replacing Josh Blaylock on the Devil's Due licensed action figure tie-in with #26, which ships in January.

FABLES artist Lan Medina has been brought in to draw **Silver Surfer** #2-6 for Marvel.

He replaces Milx, who vanished for over a fortnight after delivering the first issue of the just launched monthly.

The Malaysian artist's abrupt disappearance also affected IDW's three-part **Wake the Dead** for which he drew the opening chapter. His place on the Steve Niles-written horror mini is being taken by a newcomer, the singularly-named Chee.

THE TEEN TITANS Swingin' Elseworlds Special has been pulled from the schedule.

No reason was given by DC, which says the 48-page oneshot will be resolicited at a later date. Written by Bob Haney and drawn by Jay Stephens and Mike Allred, the \$5.95 prestige format comic was to have shipped on October 8.

MICRONAUTS is on the move. The licensed action figure tie-in is leaving Devil's Due for parts unknown after #11 ships in September.

Speculation is rife that the title – a revival of Marvel's long-running 1979 series – is destined for Future Comics where Pat Broderick, who pencilled 16 issues of the original incarnation of the comic, is Future's art and editorial coordinator.

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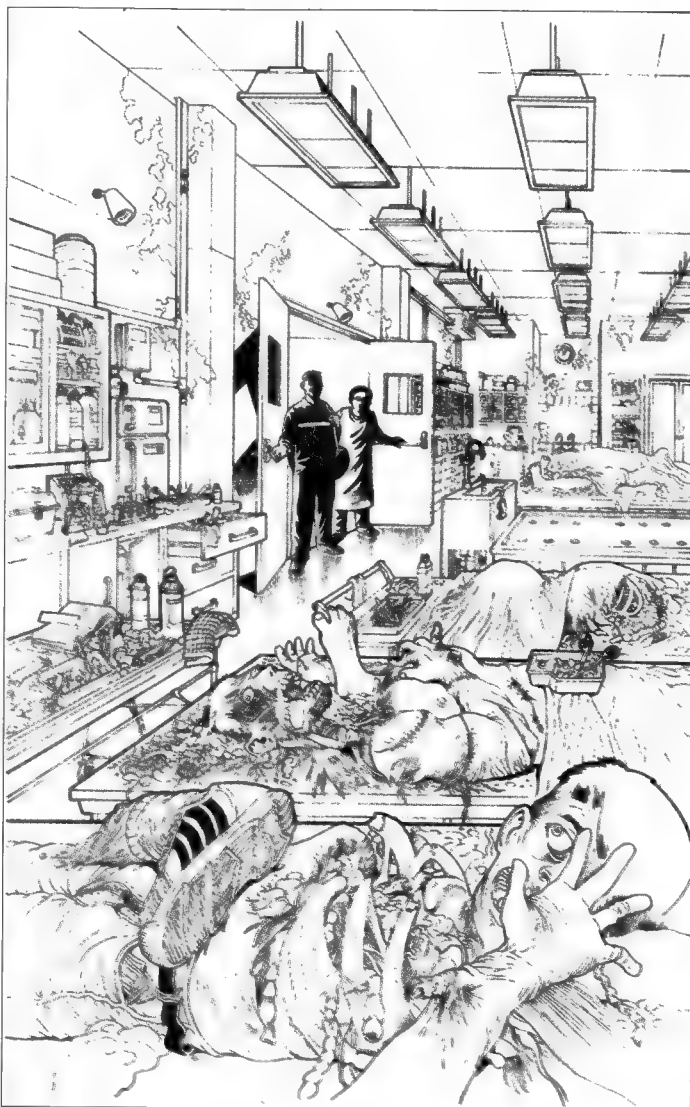
Hanley

Derby

Frankenstein riff keeps Hollywood's love affair with horror writer on boil

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest news between films and comics



SAY WHAT you will about Steve Niles – and there are those who call him the modern master of comicbook horror – but it's been a long journey to overnight stardom for someone who either knows how to give the movie industry exactly what it thinks it wants or is the luckiest bugger to come down the pike since God knows when.

Niles has certainly paid his writing dues, rarely straying far from the horror genre since starting back in 1987 with his own Arcane Comix' **Bad Moon** and subsequently **Fly in My Eye**, a series of anthologies that featured contributions from such luminaries as Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell and Steve Bisette.

He then left self-publishing for Eclipse where, among other things, he adapted several Clive Barker stories, including **The Yattering and Jack** – drawn by John Bolton –

as well as Richard Matheson's classic **I am Legend**.

Niles' version of Matheson's vampire tale was illustrated by Elman Brown. It has been unavailable since its 1991 publication but is being brought back into print by IDW. The four black and white issues are being collected in a 248-page trade paperback that goes on sale in November, with a hefty \$35 price tag.

Meanwhile, back at the main plot, following Eclipse's 1994 collapse, Niles continued to write sporadically.

Never a star name, his luck began to change when he linked up with Todd McFarlane in 2000. At that point the **Spawn** creator's Image title was still a big-selling series and his decision to get Niles to write two of the spin-offs – **Spawn: The Dark Ages** and **Hellspawn** – not only brought the writer to the public's attention but also offered him a commercial platform for his unique brand of horror.

Enter Sam Raimi

Then came **30 Days of Night**, a claustrophobic vampire comic set in an isolated Alaskan town where the nights are a month long. Incredibly popular with comics readers, the 2002 IDW mini also came to the attention of Sam Raimi.

The **Spider-Man** director snapped up the movie rights and the stage was set for Niles to become an overnight sensation... after 15 years.

Earlier this year MGM grabbed the option for **Criminal Macabre**. The first issue of the Dark Horse five-parter, which recounts the latest exploits of Niles' seedy supernatural private eye, had been on the shelves less than three weeks before the ink on the contract was dry.

Zombie remains

The trades called the MGM acquisition a pre-emptive move, which is an indication that Niles' work is attracting plenty of interest from other movie producers.

Reinforcing that hunch is the speed with which Dimension Films has picked up **Wake the Dead**. The deal was done by the beginning of August and the IDW mini doesn't even launch until September.

In optioning this latest series, the writer's version of the Frankenstein story, Dimension also grabbed something else.... a first look at **Remains**, Niles' five-issue take on zombies, which IDW is lining up for next spring.

It's pretty obvious that the movie industry believes the Niles brand of horror – a combination of new angles on old themes and an understanding of how the genre works best in a visual medium – will translate well to the screen.

Either that or he's incredibly lucky or... and remember he doesn't write much but horror... he knows where the bodies are buried.

It'll be interesting to see what happens to **The Nail**, his recently announced Dark Horse project with former White Zombie frontman Rob Zombie. It probably won't get to the shelf, let alone sit on it very long.

Iron Man

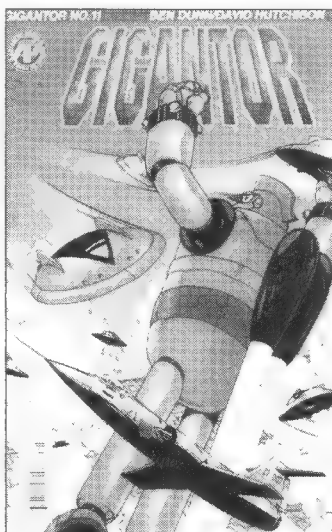
While Niles' success proves that the film industry is looking for more than just superheroes from comics and is prepared to go beyond the major publisher to seek it out, another indication comes from Sergio Arguero.

The producer of the hit Mexican film *Y Tu Mama Tambien*, is developing a movie based on an obscure title, **Masks of Sonambulo**, which is published by the little-known Ninth Circle Studios.

Written and drawn by Rafael Navarro, the black and white comic stars Salomon Lopez, a celebrated lucha wrestler. A decade after being beaten and left for dead by mobsters, he wakes from his coma to discover he can read people's dreams but can't sleep himself.

Bizarrely, although he sets himself up as a private eye, he continues to wear his wrestling mask in adventures that blend fantasy and film noir.

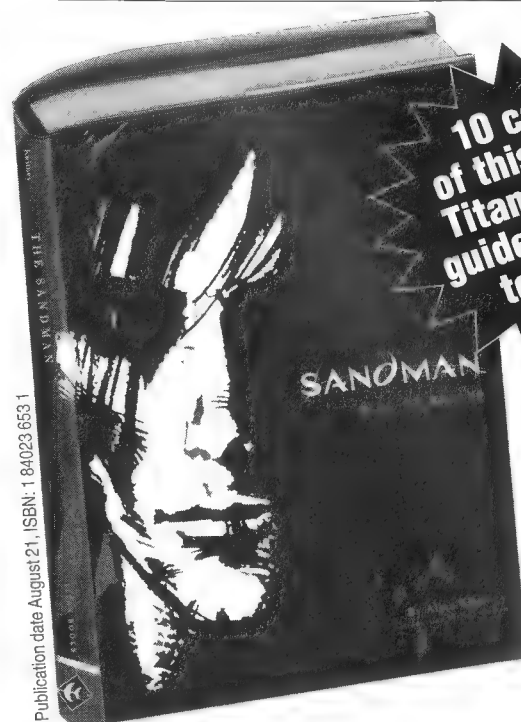
Moving to the other side of the world from Mexico, a live-action flick based on Mitsuteru Yokoyama's



Above: The cover to issue #11 of Antarctic Press's **Gigantor**, the American version of Japan's **Tetsujin 28-go**; art by Ben Dunn and David Hutchinson.

Tetsujin 28-go – which translates as **Iron Man 28** – is being lined up for a late 2004 premiere in Japan.

The manga about a 65-foot tall remote controlled robot "built for war but dedicated to peace" became an anime in 1963. Better known in America as **Gigantor**, this was instrumental in popularising the giant robot genre.



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OVER 20 years as a professional writer, Neil Gaiman has been one of the top talents in modern comics and is now a best-selling novelist, winning the Hugo, Nebula, Bram Stoker, SFX and Locus awards. Celebrating his return to Sandman through the **Endless Nights** graphic novel, former Vertigo editor Alisa Kwitney sequels her **Vertigo Visions** book with a 180 page Titan ultimate guide hardcover **Sandman: King of Dreams**. The book includes never-before-seen material and a key insider's examination of the title's 75-issue evolution, its story arcs and its contributors.

Which of the following is not written by Neil Gaiman

- a) *Black Orchid* (miniseries)
- b) *Violent Cases* (graphic novel)
- c) *Marvelman* (serial)

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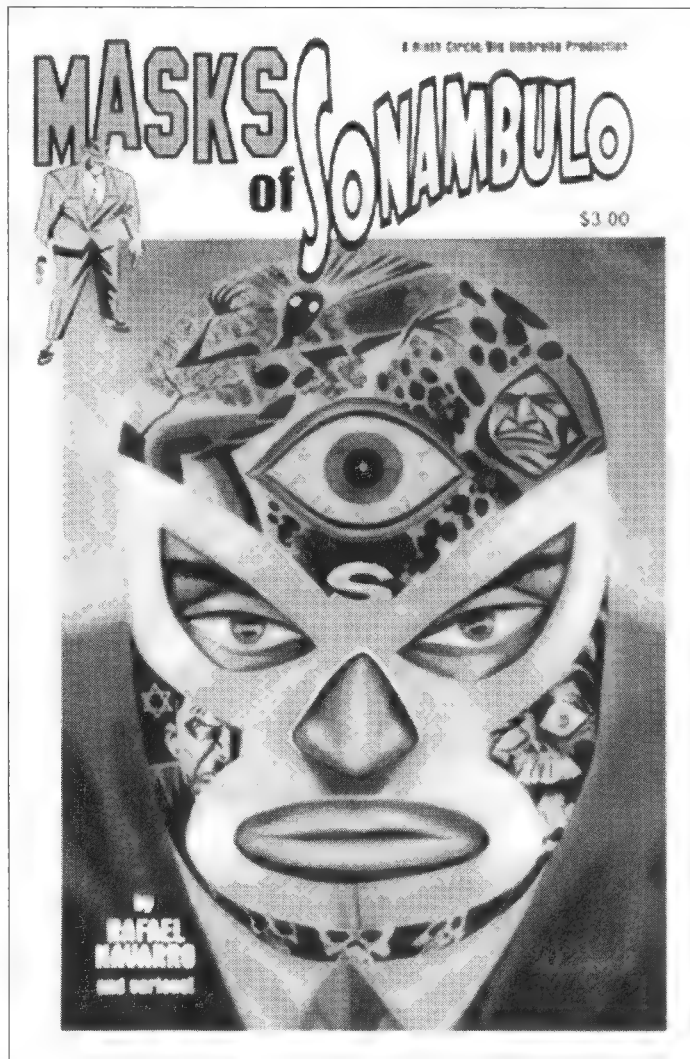
My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – no ticks):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ NEWS INTERNATIONAL | ☐ NETWORKS |
| ☐ SEZ DEZ | ☐ Q AND A |
| ☐ TALKING SHOP | ☐ REVIEWS |
| ☐ COMMENT | ☐ PANEL BEATERS |
| ☐ PITFALLS: BORDERLINE | ☐ COMICS ECONOMICS |
| ☐ ADVANCE LISTINGS | ☐ LETTERS/COMIC CUTS |
| ☐ COMPETITION | ☐ IN THE GUTTER |
| ☐ FRAME TO FRAME | ☐ DIRECTORY |
| ☐ BIFF'S ILLUMINATIONS | ☐ ADVERTISEMENTS |

PLUS... which of the above is your LEAST favourite, the one you skipped and wish we'd replaced with a new contender for the top spot:

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Above: The cover to Ninth Circle Studios **Masks of Sonambulo**; art by Rafael Navarro. Left: Chee art from the second issue of IDW's **Wake the Dead** five-parter.

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Art: Chris Ware

**Critical success,
financial failure****PITFALLS with guest writer Phil Hall***The creator of Borderline overviews publishing via the Net*

YOU WOULD have thought after reporting on the Internet for as long as I did in *Networks* that I would have been wise to follow some of the good advice and heed some of the horror stories that the CI 'net column told of. The thing is, you always think you've got something unique or different enough to make a difference.

When I parted company with CI in the summer of 2001, I had no desire to leave the comics industry and felt I had a lot to offer and prove. Despite spending 11, mainly happy, years working for Dez, I had developed a few more 'abilities' and skills while working for other people. One of these skills was using Adobe Acrobat – not a science by any means, but you'd be surprised at the level of computer ignorance that still exists in a country with as many PCs as taxpayers. I had spent nearly five years producing reports for a market research company in the multi-pleiased PDF format. PDF or Portable Data File is a viewer that allows users of virtually all operating systems (DOS, MAC, UNIX, etc.) to read or look at the same document with no need for conversion and therefore no loss of anything – what you see before you turn your document into a PDF is, normally, what you get.

As a standalone application there are few faults, it is user friendly and it scrunches up huge files and makes them... portable! The PDF idea was originally created to allow large amounts of information to be shrunk down,

into a series of inter-linked jpeg images, to allow it all to fit onto a 1.44m floppy disk. But it has proved to be somewhat more adaptable. It's all a tad more complicated than that, but for the layman that's all you really need to know.

As I said, the PDF format is a particularly versatile tool but it has its opponents, mainly people in the United States who dislike the format, mainly because the IRS uses it for its on-line tax forms. Also, as we were to learn, while PDF can act almost identically to HTML – web programming language – web purists seem to have an almost born-again

Christian stubbornness in their refusal to even allow a PDF document onto their browser, let alone read it!

Borderline was born out of the growing and highly enthusiastic comics scene that was beginning to re-emerge from years of relative slumber and economic

setbacks. I could have just produced another web page, but personally I think these are ten-a-penny and even the most professional of websites lack in a lot of areas, ranging from lack of editing skills by the people who put them together to just a general lack in having a clue. I hate HTML (at the moment) because it stops people like me, people who like playing with packages like Quark Express or PageMaker, from flexing our flare of design muscles. Everything is too much like trying to produce something readable in a bastardised version of Microsoft Excel – it's

**“You always
think you’ve
got something
unique or
different enough
to make a
difference.”**



Above: The final cover to the first issue of Phil Hall's downloadable Net magazine, rotated to suit both a computer monitor's proportions and A4 landscape paper.

all straight columns and row and horizontal lines. Besides, I just had 11 years professional experience producing a comics 'magazine' not a comics website. I had standards and I knew damn well the only way to maintain them was to assemble a team that produced a magazine and not a webzine.

I've always fancied myself as a great ideas man. One of the reasons Dez and I worked so well together was he took a lot of my ideas and made them work. It happened in reverse many times too, but things like *Movers and Shakers*

and *Networks* probably wouldn't have worked as well without both of us. I was on my own for the first time since being a fanzine editor and my big idea was to produce a magazine that was accessible to everyone, would attract

copious amounts of outside advertising and would make me (and my team of associates) rich beyond our wildest dreams. I had this dream that even if we didn't make a fortune off the Internet, we'd sell the idea to a big publisher and sit comfy for a year or so on the proceeds.

Borderline the free comics magazine was launched on August 1st, 2001. With the help of a couple of almost ever-present net users, I spent the weeks before the launch whetting people's appetites, dropping hints all over the place – utilising an old pop music PR technique of just giving people enough information to make them want to know what's going on. Because we were going to be web delivered, we used it to the max. We emailed just about every comics related website, forum, discussion list and group – being careful to make sure that no one could misconstrue the postings as spam. If we were charging people for **Borderline** we would have found it very difficult to post the way we did. If you decide to charge for anything you normally have to forewarn people on whatever list you're posting too that what you are posting about is an advert. We

found a way around that, and while some people were incensed by our behaviour, enough people were intrigued by us to try us.

We wanted 20,000 people to download the magazine. We had a potential worldwide audience and we'd got people talking about us. We had 24,000 downloads in the first 3 days – we almost burnt out our server with the amount of bandwidth being used and this is where doing it in PDF was far less prudent than doing it in HTML.

Even the smallest edition of **Borderline** weighed in at over 1 megabyte, the high-resolution – designed for broadband users – edition could be as high as 14meg. When you have the amount of people downloading as we eventually had, the strain that kind

of activity can have on your bank balance is frightening.

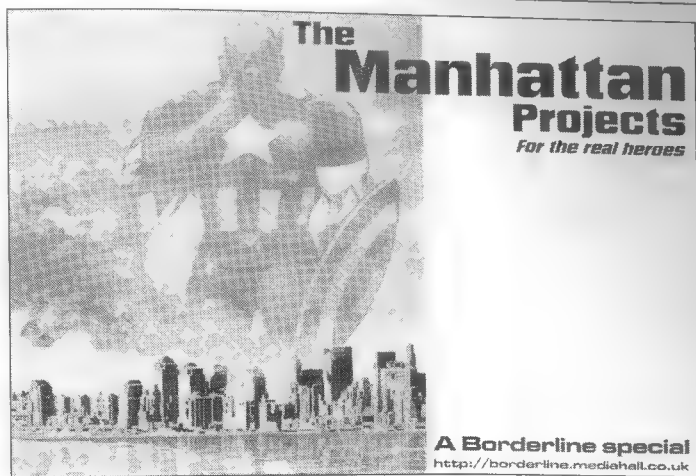
Bandwidth costs money and if I had not owned the web hosting company that housed **Borderline** it would have cost over £100 a month.

By the end of the first month over 50,000 people had downloaded the magazine, this figure was to treble by issue #3 when we did our first major story on South America. The feature on Mauricio da Sousa gained us invaluable exposure on the *Monica's Gang* website, one of the world's most popular websites, and with over 800,000 hits per week the undisputed king of comics sites.

Because of the mutual coverage, #3 began to make us think we really could make some good money from **Borderline**.

A word of warning to anyone thinking of doing anything remotely innovative themselves. Strike while the iron is hot, because if you don't it's downhill all the way.

I'm not a publisher. While I think I'm a good editor, I never had to think of **Borderline** as a paying concern. To me it was so bloody good people would be fools not to align themselves with it or want to throw money at it. So I was calling a lot of people foolish



when hardly anyone at all wanted or showed an interest in advertising.

Borderline had continued because of the determination and enthusiasm of the people involved. The problem was, because it wasn't a slapdash website, the amount of work going into its production was stopping at least two involved people from doing anything else and others involved were doing things above and beyond the brief of the magazine to make sure we got the best coverage.

With advertisers thin on the ground things were looking bleak then salvation appeared to appear in the form of a web company with supposed pots of money. *Cool Beans World* offered us money to produce the magazine for them. We accepted unaware they were actually going bankrupt and were hoping our presence on their site

would generate enough money in the short term to save their company. Heck, with thinking like that you can see why we stuck at it for so long?

We got royally shafted and I personally took all the blame. I was so wrapped up in the apparent success of the magazine I failed to see so many warning signs it almost became a joke. And still we carried on, we'd only done it for eight months and already we'd been on a rollercoaster ride that many other magazines would dream of.

Borderline was still making the news, not just reporting on it.

The publicity from *Cool Beans* collapse coupled with an extremely unhealthy public row with Warren Ellis and out and out begging letter campaign ensured that the next issue of **Borderline** would have another huge download figure. How could we stop now when so many people were still depending on us?

The magazine maintained a healthy 60K average of downloads month in and month out and we just carried on carrying on. We won an award, almost got picked up by a major publisher for a newsstand deal, attempted to woo a new batch of potential advertisers and still failed to get any significant income. A few months earlier, we had taken the advice of

Understanding Comics' Scott McCloud and set up a Paypal account, the small amount of money this generated each month finally made us decide to try charging for **Borderline**.

It was something none of us had ever wanted to do, but every other angle had failed. We agreed on charging \$1.00 because we believed people wouldn't mind parting with such a small amount of money for something with as much content as a \$7.00 book. If we got a 10% pick up we would have made \$6,000 a month. As it was we had significantly less than that. We also had to set up alternative payment methods which necessitated us forming a limited company just so we could sign up for international payment schemes such as WorldPay, which resulted in the cash handler making more money than the

"How could we stop now when so many people were still depending on us?"

producer of the goods. After four months of poor sales, and despite playing the sex card and failing, we decided to go back to being free. But by this time the editorial team that had once

been as many as 12 people mucking in was now down to six and falling.

#20 was the last monthly issue. Months of hard work, dashed hopes and possibly worst of all, critical acclaim had taken their toll. I'm surprised we stuck at it for as long as we did. I'm still amazed some of the original team believe there could be a future for **Borderline**. There could be, but not as a PDF Internet delivered magazine, nor as a website and now with the demise of *Tripwire* not in print either.

Ultimately it ended up a labour of love which had massive highs and major lows. It was a financial folly and proved once and for all to me that while the Internet has massive amounts of potential it'll never fulfil that potential while people continue to have a mistrust of it.

In Pitfalls to come: Next issue publisher/editor Joel Meadows on the perils of taking Tripwire to the newsstands. To follow: The demise of Stateside Comics, Warrior and Vertigo UK. Beyond that, let us know who you'd like to hear set the record straight.



Above: **Borderline's** fourth issue, eclectic content including interviews plus Scarfe, Manara, Kia Asamiya, "Arab comics", Euro Manga, German festivals and Jeph Loeb.

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Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Instigating the "Prove It!" rule

Comment by Comic Shop Employee, Central London

I'M WRITING these words on Sunday the 17th of August, three days after we were told by DC that **League of Extraordinary Gentlemen** #6 would be shipping. As those of you who have tried coming in to buy the comic know, it didn't arrive. Again.

I think that is the final straw, ladies and gentlemen. I'm going to propose an idea that will probably make me unpopular with the creative folks, but needs doing. Personally I have little interest in **JLA/Avengers** but they came up with a bloody good idea: *Don't Solicit A Comic Until It's Ready!*

How many times have we waited ages for the latest issues of the new **Planetary**, **League**, **Black Cat**, **Dark Knight** etc, only to be shunted off with no explanation? Or to put it in more simple terms, how many times have we been lied to?

I'm sure the nice people at DC and Marvel have their own reasons and rationalisations for it, but when it is said in **Diamond Previews** that **Planetary 16** or **Black Cat 4** will ship on a certain date and does not do so, then DC and Marvel have lied. Pure and simple.

Hence, my idea: The "Prove It" rule. It's pretty simple. Draw up a list of every creator whose name has been attached to a comic that has been late with no explanation or apology and when these writers and artists want to solicit a new title, make them prove it will be

ready on time. They should show their distributor **Diamond** – not their publisher, but **Diamond** – at least two issues of finished pencil art from their new work.

That way, their publisher can solicit the comicbook safe in the knowledge that come the date said issue has been solicited, it will actually arrive. If the book isn't ready yet, it doesn't get solicited. Piece of piss!

Let me make it a bit more simple. Let's take **Frank Miller**, whose **Dark Knight Strikes Back** arrived six months late. Say, for example, he has an idea for a third **Batman** miniseries. Well, under the new rule, before DC could solicit for the first issue of his comic, **Diamond** would have to see issues one and two done. Pencilled and merely awaiting colouring and lettering but besides that ready to be shipped.

Nobody is having to do anything they wouldn't have done anyway, since the comic has to be written and drawn. No more wasted money spent on pages in **Previews** for comics that don't exist yet. A comic that people can have when they've been told they can have it.

No more "Been delayed, sorry" replies to irritable customers who have done nothing wrong but spend their money on your magnum opus. This doesn't strike me as unreasonable.

"Prove It!" because we don't fucking believe you any more!

Hulk: from frame to frame

Comment by David Robertson via e-mail: d1robertson@hotmail.com

LIKE many kids in the late-Seventies, I was a great fan of *The Incredible Hulk* TV show with **Bill Bixby** and **Lou Ferrigno**, and I transferred my liking for the character into reading the comic.

Marvel UK put together good comics and annuals at the time, featuring articles on the series, reprints of **Stan Lee**/**Jack Kirby** comics and new stories written in a style halfway between the US comic version and the TV show. In fact, the Marvel of today could learn something from these books about transferring current movie

fan kids to the comics!

As a lifelong **Hulk** fan I found the new movie extremely enjoyable. My biggest criticism would be that the final battle was somewhat incomprehensible.

Meanwhile there has been an air of dull confusion and disappointment expressed from people I know who have seen it, whose last encounter with the character was the TV series.

I think the problem that many have had is one of expectations being confounded. The audience, encouraged by cereal boxes and

fast food freebies to go in expecting a fun superhero ride, instead end up viewing a story about a man suffering a monstrous physical manifestation of child abuse! The movie is just not very happy, whoever you are and however you look at it.

A friend of mine expressed surprise that *The Hulk* would have such a topic in the story, and took this to be a sign of a difference between the treatment of the character in the movie and that in the comic. I immediately pointed out the storyline (and indeed several actual lines) were straight out of the comic – namely the infamous *Monster!*, from #312 by Bill Mantlo and Mike Mignola in the mid-Eighties.

It came readily to mind because it's always been one of my favourite Hulk stories. I viewed it as an example of sophisticated storytelling at that time (it still stands as an example of what is nominally a superhero comic tackling a more sombre issue). I was actually quite surprised to see it used in the movie.

As it turns out, Barry Windsor-Smith is apparently claiming that the story was ripped off from a proposal he gave to Marvel that was rejected. What a shame to have one of my favourite comics spoiled in this fashion.

Oh, well. Now I know how Sixties fans of early Marvel felt when Kirby started accusing Lee of stealing all his credit.

Take pride in your anoraks!

Comment by Guy Adams, Studland, Swanage

SO, HOW'S it feeling? Once again, due to the heroic quantity of celluloid (read 'socially acceptable') versions of our four-colour fantasies, comics have gained a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the public at large.

We've always had it tough, huddled in our cosy anoraks like the dedicated fanboys we are, our passion sidelining us as eccentric at best, immature to the point of being retarded at worst.

But now, with our obsession being waved from Hollywood's sign with the enthusiasm only a fickle accountant could possess, we have a brief window of popularity. Work colleagues – previously noticeable in their efforts to avoid us, casting wary glances at our scowling Wolverine statuette and stack of well-thumbed *Previews* catalogues – can now be seen sidling self-consciously in our direction, hunting for facts to solve the usual pub table disputes.

True enough, five minutes of in-depth *Phoenix Saga* discussion will usually put things back the way they were but at least they make an effort. And, of course, the fanboy network is growing; many enthusiastic youths who had put their comics-reading behind them can be seen loitering awkwardly in our comics shops, painfully aged, staring in confusion at the racks of barely remembered titles and, with all the shyness of a teenager attempting to buy porn, taking the plunge once again.

But what about us? Could this be the first important step along the path to 'coolness' and if so, do we really want it? I would hazard to suggest that a sizeable percentage of comics readers really wouldn't know what to do with it if you gave it to them.

There's something inherent in all 'fans' (irrespective of the subject they choose to dedicate themselves to) that begs for the

sideline of general society, we choose to avoid the demographic.

There's the halfway point of course – a position most often occupied by football fans (arguably the most acceptable fandom) but let us agree on terms here. Let us specify our definitions. Follow your team, know your players, enthuse upon your subject... fine; and yet you'll have to list the results of every match your team has played over the last 10 years before I'll grant you the full anorak status.

Let's be honest here, most of us are devoted to our comics way beyond the norm. That's what makes us what we are. It's what keeps our hoods on tight. Don't agree? Fine, then remove all your comics from their protective bags (and if you've added backing boards as well then you really do need to take a long hard look at yourself).

It's OK, don't fear the anorak – it stands for passion and that'll never be a bad thing. God save us from banality; that really would be a crime.

My point is simple; don't let this passing fad of comics acceptability tempt you from the path. Trust me, it wouldn't work for us out there.

My suggestion would be to leave it all well alone, hope that the upsurge in sales keeps the quality of our publications high and their continuation safe and avoid all attempts to legitimise ourselves socially.

We're outsiders with our need for acceptance fuelled within these pages or at conventions. But don't make the step, it'll end in tears. And if that pub table dispute heads in your direction, the hook to shed your anorak and join the masses dangled, simply pound the table with your fists and scream "Hulk Smash!!!" and wait for the conversation to veer safely away.

Trust me, works every time!

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The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE FROM

OCT 1

Dark Horse

one-shot **Drawing on Your Nightmares**

Halloween 2003 Special (Steve Niles + Ben Templesmith & Eric Powell + Brett Matthews) Cal McDonald's latest case, in which the foul-mouthed private dick rubs elbows with undead gangsters in Las Vegas. \$2.99

Go Boy 7: Human Action Machine 4 (Tom Peyer & Jon Sommariva + Kris Justice) Go Boy 7's grief over his murdered parents fuels the Cultist's cruellest bid yet to destroy him. \$2.99

Oh My Goddess! 102 (Dr Moreau 3 of 5; Kosuke Fujishima) Keiichi and Belldandy have stumbled upon the robotic experiments of a mad scientist, and his cybernetic creations are running amok. b&w \$2.99

Star Wars: Empire 14 (Jeremy Barlow & Tomas Giorello) A rare view of the days of the Rebellion from the perspective of a soldier of the Empire—specifically that of a Stormtrooper who is transferred to the newly commissioned Death Star. \$2.99

DC Comics

100 Bullets 47 (In *Stinked* 1 of 6; Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo*) Jack and Mikey—last seen in issue 22—go on the road trip from Hell. Jack discovers that the only way to get the monkey off his back is to let the tiger out of its cage, if you catch my weasel. Mature readers. \$2.50

Action Comics 808 (Joe Kelly & Pascual Ferry + Cam Smith) Natasha Irons, Girl 13 and the new Supergirl take an injured Superman to his Fortress for a last stand against Byakko. \$2.25

one-shot **Animal Man: Deus Ex Machina**

(Grant Morrison & various; tpbk; *Vertigo*) Reprinting *Animal Man* #18-26. Follow Buddy Baker through an odyssey of discovery. Mature readers. 232pgs \$19.95

Arkham Asylum: Living Hell 6 (of 6; Dan Slott & Ryan Sook + Wade Von Grawbadger) Arkham Asylum is besieged by malevolent spirits, and only one man can deliver its inhabitants from a fate worse than death. \$2.50

The Authority 6 (Robbie Morrison & Tan Eng Huat) The Authority must contend with one of the most defining—and dangerous—aspects of the human race: faith! Mature readers. \$2.95

Bad Girls 3 (of 6; Steve Vance & Christine Norrie + J. Bone) Will the Bad Girls unleash their power-packed pettiness on the world, or on one another? \$2.50

new **Batman: City of Light** 1 (of 8; The Pander Brothers +

Mark Paniccia & The Pander Brothers + Alvaro Lopez) Renowned architect Evan Slate wants to transform Gotham City using a mysterious glowing material that will eliminate shadows from the City's streets. \$2.95

Detective Comics 787 (Brian K. Vaughan + Rick Spears & Rick Burchett + John Lowe) The Mad Hatter has kidnapped Dr Kirk Langstrom, aka the Man-Bat! But how does the volatile doctor slit into the Hatter's twisted scheme to remake Gotham in his own warped image? 40pg \$2.75

Extinction Event 4 (of 5; Robert Weinberg & Brett Booth + Sal Regla) With Rick and Samantha behind bars and Jamal and the others on the run from the creatures, can anyone warn the world of the impending doom? \$2.50

Formerly Known as the Justice League 4 (of 6; Keith Giffen + J.M. Dematteis & Kevin Maguire + Joe Rubinstein) Within the bowels of Roulette's underground fight club, Mary Marvel and Captain Atom battle as hundreds of the world's most dangerous villains look on. \$2.50

Harley Quinn 37 (A.J. Lieberman & Mike Huddleston + Troy Nixey) Harley has little Amanda as well as the access code everyone's after! With international crime cartels in hot pursuit, Harley is out of options. But if she hands the girl over, she'll doom her to a lifetime of blindness. \$2.50

Hawkman 20 (Geoff Johns & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) Batman has the Joker, Superman has Lex Luthor, and Hawkman will meet his greatest adversary in *The Headhunter*. \$2.50

Justice League Adventures 24 (Fabian Nicieza & Tim Levins + Robin

Riggs) Is it a rampaging supervillain? An alien threat? Or just a misguided little boy? Superman, Batman and Jonn J'onzz have their own opinions, but will they learn the truth before it's too late? \$2.25

Looney Tunes 107 (various) Porky Pig takes a tumultuous train trip; Yosemite Sam babysits Tweety; and Daffy Duck teaches Elmer Fudd to hunt wabbits. \$2.25

MAD Magazine 435 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Autumn is here, and what better way to celebrate than with this stupefying issue of MAD? 48pg \$3.50

Robotech: Love and War 5 (of 6; Jay Faerber + Ken Siu-Chong & various) Max Sterling must face the most difficult task of all— notifying the Dixons of their son's death in combat. Variant cover. \$2.95

Superman: Birthright 4 (of 12; Mark Waid & Leinil Yu + Gerry Alanguilan) Witness Clark Kent's job interview at the Daily Planet. While he's there, Metropolis comes under attack! \$2.95

Superman: The Man of Steel Vol 2 (John Byrne + Marv Wolfman & various; tpbk) Superman #1-3, Action Comics #585-587 and Adventures of Superman #424-426 are collected, reintroducing readers to the likes of Lex Luthor, Metallo, Darkseid, and more. 224pg \$19.95

one-shot **Teen Titans/Outsiders**

Secret Files 2003 (various) Donna Troy's friends and loved ones remember their fallen friend. 64pg \$5.95

Thundercats: Dogs of War 5 (John Layman & Brett Booth + Al Vey) The Thundercats, along with friends and enemies, old and new, rise up against the malevolent War Dogs in a war to end all wars. Variant cover. \$2.95

World's Best Comics: The Golden Age DC Archives Sampler (various) Sampler featuring four classic Golden Age tales of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and Plastic Man. Reprinting tales from Superman #6, Batman #5, Sensation Comics #11, and Police Comics #51. 48pg \$0.99

Marvel

Alias 27 (Purple 4 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Gaydos, *Max Comics*) Jessica finally comes face-to-face with the evil that changed her life forever. A gut-wrenching last page that will have fans talking. Mature. \$2.99

one-shot **The Art of Marvel Comics** Vol 1 (various; hbk) Lush coffee-table book features more than 100 colour illustrations. 128pg \$29.99

Doctor Octopus: Negative Exposure 1 (of 5; Brian K. Vaughan & Staz Johnson)

Doctor Octopus has a secret weapon up his sleeve—Jeff Brasi, a staff photographer from the Daily Bugle who wants to know just how a stringer named Peter Parker always seems to get the front page. \$2.99

Elektra 28 (Robert Rodi & Sean Chen) In a hi-rise over the city, three corporate bosses meet for drinks and dinner to talk golf, fine cigars, finer women, and the unsavoury business of controlling the world, never expecting the tables are about to be turned. \$2.99

Exiles 35 (*Fantastic Voyage* 1 of 3; Judd Winnick & Clayton Henry) The Exiles encounter an alternate world version of the Fantastic Four. \$2.99

Marvel Masterworks:

The Avengers Vol 1 (various) Representing the formation of the Avengers, the revival of Captain America, plus appearances by the Sub-Mariner, Kang the Conqueror, Immortus, Wonder Man, and The Masters of Evil. Collects Avengers Vol 1 #1-10. 240pg \$49.99

Spider-Girl 65 (*Marked For Death!* 5 of 6; Tom DeFalco & Ron Frenz) Mayday is forced into a battle against the mysterious foes that have already killed one cast member. \$2.99

Supreme Power 3 (J. Michael Straczynski & Gary Frank; *Max Comics*) When reports of a secretive government project "Hyperion" begin to surface in shadowy circles, investigative reporter Jason Scott starts to see a connection. Mature readers. \$2.99

new **Thanos** 1 (Jim Starlin) What inner demons drive the mad Titan known as Thanos towards his goals, and what hidden desires pull at his heart and mind now? \$2.99

Thor 70 (Dan Jurgens & Scot Eaton) A character from the present is thrust into the future. What will he make of the world Thor has constructed from the ruins of Earth and Asgard, and how will his presence change the balance of power? \$2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 47 (*Unfair* 1 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Kingpin of Crime is back—and he's got vengeance on his mind, commanding the entire Underworld to find out who Spider-Man really is—at all costs! \$2.25

Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 7: Irresponsible (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; tpbk) How can Spider-Man fight a new mysterious foe named Geldhoff if he can't even find a costume? Collects Ultimate Spider-Man #40-45. 144pg \$12.99

ON SALE FROM

OCT 8

Dark Horse

Astro Boy Vol 20 (Osamu Tezuka; tpbk) Action and adventure tales told with skill, range, and emotional power. \$9.95

one-shot **Blade of the Immortal** 83:

Path of Shadows (Hiroaki Samura) Anotsu Kagehisa and Asano Rin have followed separate paths in search of revenge. Now they find themselves travelling the same path together. Mature readers. b&w \$2.99

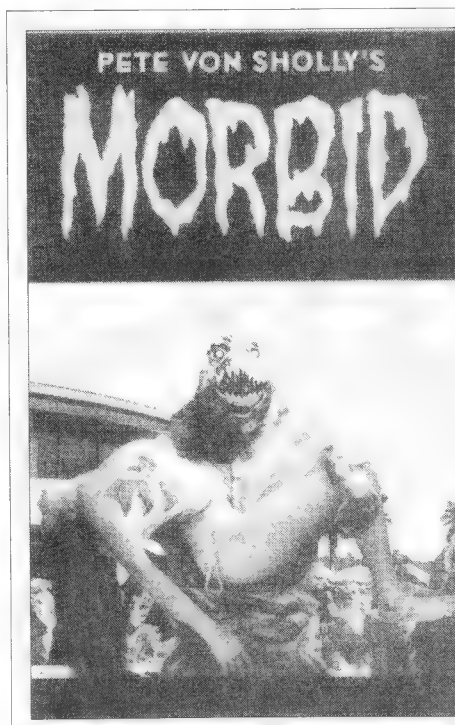
Future World Vol 2 (Osamu Tezuka; tpbk) Fumoon, a creature with supernatural powers, discovers a colossal gas cloud approaching Earth that will completely disintegrate the planet. \$13.95

Grendel: God and the Devil 9 (of 10; Matt Wagner & Jay Geldhof + Jeremy Cox) Grendel makes his most determined and effective strike against God, and the horrendous, bloody truth behind the church is revealed in shocking display. Mature readers. \$3.50

one-shot **Pete Von Sholly's Morbid** (Pete Von Sholly; tpbk) See *Close-Up*, left.

Seraphic Feather Vol 3: Dark Angel (Hiroyuki Utagane & Toshiya Takeda; tpbk) A buried alien starship on the dark side of the moon is ready to give up its secrets, and those who want to harness its incredible power draw in an ever-tightening circle of deception and death. 240pg b&w \$17.95

Syn 2 (Keith Giffen & Greg Titus + Julian Washburn) Machine has become human! But it may be more than Syn was prepared for as she has now become



close-up

Pete Von Sholly's Morbid

Dark Horse

Writer/Artist: Pete Von Sholly

Groundbreaking publication blurring the line between cinema and comicbooks. Von Sholly is a veteran storyboard artist, squeezing *The Mask*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Mars Attacks* into his CV. Here he plays with a special effects-filled format previously unseen in comics. The stories themselves run the gamut from tongue-in-cheek lampoons of 1950s drive-in movies to gut-wrenching horror in the Lovecraft tradition. 96pg \$14.95

ON SALE OCTOBER 8

the only human in a world filled with machines, and when her presence is discovered she may be in for the fight of her life. \$2.99

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 621 (Joe Casey & Derek Aucoin) Metropolis has a brand new hero unlike any the city has ever seen! But does the Minuteman have anything to do with the city's children turning into insects? \$2.25

All-Star Archives Vol 9 (John Broome & various; tpbk) Reprinting All-Star Comics #39-43, this Archive Edition has the JSA taking on the Injustice Society, Professor Zodiac, and more. 224pg \$49.95

one-shot Batman: Absolution (J.M. DeMatteis & Brian Ashmore) Ten years after an attack on Wayne Enterprises by a group of urban terrorists, Batman discovers ringleader in hiding in India. 96pg. \$17.95

Batman: Death and the Maidens 3 (of 9; Greg Rucka & Klaus Janson) Ra's al Ghul and Nyssa continue their private-yet-global war, Talia meets her destiny, and Alfred discovers something amiss in the Batcave. \$2.95

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 172 (John Wagner & Chris Brunner) A new breed of vigilantes called Rough Justice burst onto the scene in Gotham. Inspired by Batman, they plan to wipe crime off the streets for good. \$2.50

The Demon: Driven Out 2 (Joshua Dysart & Pop Mhan + Art Thibert) A fateful racing crash has left young Arme Okumuro possessed by Elrigan the Demon – and her actions begin to tear her Yakuza clan apart! \$2.50

Dr Fate 3 (of 5; Christopher Golden & Don Kramer + Prentiss Rollins) Nabu has disappeared, and Dr Fate grows more alarmed at his absence and the coven of Salem mystics make their magical intentions known. \$2.50

Fables 18 (Bill Willingham & Linda Medley; *Vertigo*) When the Fables were exiled, the Lilliputian soldiers found themselves without any women. And when Thumbelina comes to town, it's every man for himself. Mature. \$2.50

Fallen Angel 4 (Peter David & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) Lee scours Bete Noire for clues about Teresa's murder – which leads her to an uneasy alliance with Slate. \$2.50

Gen 14 (Chris Claremont & Ramón F. Bachs + Sandra Hope; *WildStorm*) As the hunt for the original Gen intensifies, Caitlin Fairchild comes to the shocking discovery that everything she believes about her world and herself is a lie. \$2.95

Green Arrow 31 (*Straight Shooter*) of 6; Judd Winick & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Ollie makes his final, desperate stand against the unbeatable assassin Constantine Drakon. \$2.50

one-shot Hellblazer: Rake at the Gates of Hell (Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon; *Vertigo*) Reprinting Hellblazer #78-83 as well as the one-shot Heartland. John Constantine heads towards a final showdown with a revenge-crazed Satan during a raging race riot, and in addition to desperately trying to save his dwindling number of living friends, Constantine also has one final reunion with his lost love Kit. Mature readers. 224pg \$19.95

H-E-R-O 9 (Will Pfeifer & Kano) Tony Finch has another dream: to be the greatest supervillain of all time! He's made his plans. He's done his homework. And now, thanks to the device, he has the power. \$2.50

Human Defense Corps 6 (of 6; Ty Templeton & Clément Sauve Jr + Dennis

Janke) Humans meet demons in an all-out battle upon the face of Hell – and one Corps member is about to learn he has a lot more in common with the enemy than he thought. \$2.50

JLA 88 (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The Burning Martian has hijacked the world's nuclear weapons, psychically triggering World War III – and the JLA must scramble to track down all the warheads. \$2.25

JSA: All-Stars 6 (of 8; various) What must Doctor Mid-Nite face from his past, and how will he confront the future? \$2.50

one-shot Life Eaters (David Brin & Scott Hampton; *WildStorm*; hbk) It's 1944 and the Nazis are on the ropes, sliding toward inevitable defeat, until the gods of Norse mythology inexplicably appear and turn the tides of the war in the favour of the Axis. Oh, Mary. 144pg \$29.95

Scooby-Doo 77 (John Rozum + Michael Kraiger & various) Mysterious doings are in the stars as the gang investigates a haunted observatory. \$2.25

Stormwatch: Team Achilles 16 (Micah Ian Wright & C.P. Smith; *WildStorm*) Citizen Soldier destroys every satellite in orbit, cutting off the media, knocking out communications grids throughout the world, and pushing the world closer to war. Mature. \$2.95

Supeman & Batman: Generations III #10 (of 12; John Byrne) Exile on another dimensional plane for 800 years has left the gods of New Genesis virtually devoid of power. Can they survive the trap Darkseid has set for them? .. \$2.95

one-shot The Teen Titans Swingin' Elseworlds Special (Bob Haney & Jay Stephens + Mike Allred; *Elseworlds*) Step back in time as the original Teen Titans – Robin, Wonder Girl, Kid Flash, Speedy, and Aqualad – find themselves on an adventure to rescue the King of Camelot himself: John F. Kennedy! 48pg \$5.95

Tom Strong 23 (Peter Hogan & Chris Sprouse + Karl Story; *America's Best Comics*) Tom Strong, Tesla, and her boyfriend Val head to the moon on a rescue mission at the request of Russian Science-Hero Svetlana-X. \$2.95

new Two Step 1 (of 3; Warren Ellis & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti; *Cliffhanger*) When camera-girl Rosi Blades films Zen gangster Tony Ling chasing down a runaway gang member, she quickly finds herself caught in a mad duel over a stolen case. Mature readers. \$2.95

Marvel

Avengers 73 (*Search For She-Hulk* 2 of 4; Geoff Johns & Scott Kolins) While the Avengers continue to search the globe for her, Jennifer Walters seeks the one person on Earth who can help control her transformations. \$2.25

Captain America 19 (*Captain America Lives Again* 3 of 4; Dave Gibbons & Lee Weeks) Captain America fights the world-domineering Nazis in a strange new reality. \$2.99

Captain America Vol 3: Ice (Chuck Austen & John Ney Rieber + Jae Lee; tpbk) When a mysterious package arrives at his door and he crosses paths with a shadowy new villain named The Interrogator, Captain America learns everything about his past, his memories, and himself may not be what it seems! Collects Captain America #12-16 128pg \$12.99

Emma Frost 4 (*Higher Learning* 4 of 6; Karl Bollers & Randy Green) Vacationing with her family in Peru, young Emma Frost discovers her new-

found mutant powers aren't the only secret that her family is keeping! \$2.50

Fantastic Four Vol 2: Unthinkable (Mark Waid & Mike Wieringo; tpbk) Doctor Doom, the greatest villain the Marvel Universe has ever known, and the most personal and persistent nemesis the Fantastic Four has ever encountered, rises again. Collects Fantastic Four #67-70, #500-502. 200pg \$17.99

Human Torch 7 (*Out* 1 of 2; Karl Kesel & Skottie Young) It's the scoop of the century when a Hollywood tabloid drags Johnny Storm out of the closet! The only problem is, Johnny isn't gay. \$2.50

Incredible Hulk 62 (*Split Decisions* 3 of 6; Bruce Jones & Mike Deodato) As Bruce Banner flees New York City to the desert home of his former lover and colleague Nadia Blonsky, Home Base unleashes yet another sinister plan to destroy The Hulk. \$2.25

Incredible Hulk Vol 5: Hide in Plain Sight (Bruce Jones & Leandro Fernandez; tpbk) After being locked away in a secret underground prison, The Absorbing Man has gained the new ability to jump in and out of people's minds. \$11.99

Iron Man 73 (*The Best Defense* 1 of 6; John Jackson Miller & Jorge Lucas) Tony Stark gave up building weapons for the US Military years ago, but tired of the missiles that miss their targets and planes that are easy targets, the government wants him back. \$2.99

Kingpin 5 (Bruce Jones & Sean Phillips & Klaus Janson) The stakes in New York's mob war are raised as Wilson Fisk's former lieutenant, Rocko, begins a brutal revenge campaign against his old boss. \$2.50

Marvel 1602 #3 (of 8; Neil Gaiman & Andy Kubert + Richard Isanove) Matthew Murdoch continues to make his way across Europe to get the mysterious Templar treasure that Dr Strange thinks will give him the key to the mysterious weather changes. \$3.50

Namor 7 (Andi Watson & Bill Jemas & Pat Olliffe) Witness the mounting culture clash between Atlantis and the landlubbers, with star-crossed lovers Sandy and Prince Namor caught in the middle. \$2.99

new Nyx 1 (Joe Quesada & Josh Middleton) Middleton's images are simultaneously gorgeous and eerie: Say hello to a pack of wayward angels with dirty faces who, instead of preparing for Magneto's next big assault, must learn to survive in the cold, harsh world of the city that never sleeps. \$2.99

Punisher 33 (*Confederacy of Dunces* 1 of 5; Garth Ennis & John McCrea) It might be The Punisher's final hour as Daredevil, Spider-Man, and Wolverine team up to bring Frank Castle's killing spree to an end. \$2.99

Runaways 7 (*Teenage Wasteland* 1 of 4; Brian K. Vaughan & Adrian Alphona) Still on the run from their supervillain parents, this motley crew of superpowered kids finds a kindred spirit in a daring young stranger. \$2.50

Sentinel 7 (*No Hero* 1 of 3; Sean McKeever & Udon) Juston must decide his next move – but has the Marvel Universe given birth to a new hero, or to a monster? \$2.50

Spectacular Spider-Man 5 (Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos) Eddie Brock is dying. His cancer has caught up to him and Venom has finally lost his ideal host. As Spidey tries to understand why Eddie has hated him all these years, he's forced to make an ultimate decision... Should Spidey save Eddie's life – allowing Venom to live? \$2.25

Ultimate Six 3 (of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Trevor Hairsine) The Six has escaped their S.H.I.E.L.D. holding pen, and the outlines of Norman Osborn's horrific scheme become apparent. \$2.25

Illuminations



Highlights from October's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Avera

With a wider range of people coming through our doors, a wider range of intelligent, well-written comics is needed to secure their repeat visits. Comics like **Caper** #1 from DC – a crime thriller set in 1900s San Francisco drawn by Farel Dalrymple whose atmospheric art adds the style and character needed to give this title high sales. Judd Winnick is scripting and his work on **Green Arrow** and **Green Lantern** has proven he has the skill to weave a tale that will hold our interest for the full 12 issues. Don't dismiss or underestimate this series. **Sales 5/5 Quality 3/5**

Mix DC's top hero (Batman) with the classic villain (The Joker) and mix in the fabulous art of horror meister John Bolton and 64-page prestige one-shot **Batman/Joke Switch** is destined for high initial sales and just as **Killing Joke**, the Brian Bolland-drawn first Joker prestige story, is still selling as strongly now as when first published in 1988 (in fact it went to eight prints within four years), I expect this to have a long and healthy life. The story sees The Joker drugged and left in London whereupon he sets about causing his usual mayhem. Batman races against time to find him before he carves up the city while the true villain sits back and laughs. Class is written all over this. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Marvel has now confirmed that high numbering is in fact an asset and not a hindrance to good sales. The order figures on **Fantastic Four** 500 (should have been #71) were so high that **Amazing Spider-Man** #59 has now become #500. Will people buy more? Of course they will, even me. I'm a sucker for the big landmark issues and they don't get bigger than 500 (well, except **Action Comics** which reached #800 this year which is quite a lot bigger). The premise of the story causes a look back over Spidey's career – what a surprise – but the pluses are J. Michael Straczynski writing and both John Romitas, Jr and Sr, the artists. Once again a title set for high initial sales which will lead to a long term shelf life. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Having been caught up by the success of **Daredevil: Yellow and Spider-Man: Blue**, I will not be foolish enough to underorder **Hulk: Gray** #1. Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale have developed a winning formula with their respectful and atmospheric retelling of the classic Marvel characters origins. However, more than just a retelling they also seem able to embellish, expand, nay improve on the original. This will be in my Top 10 for the month. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Now a little bit of personal preference slips in as my top tip for the month is Marvel's **Thanos** #1. Thanos, amoral, calculating, power-crazed, obsessed with Mistress Death and being master of all reality has been the centre of Jim Starlin's very successful **Infinity Gauntlet/War/Crusade, Abyss, Marvel Universe: The End**, and the prestige two-parter **Thanos The Quest**. I have found that while sometimes trite, maybe patronising, these stories of cosmic schemes have challenged my perception of reality and have always been worth re-reading. Now a series dedicated to this character and concepts of a cosmic nature is my idea of heaven. To cap it all off Jim Starlin is writing and drawing. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Final tip for the month is a CrossGen title, **Rob Zombie's Spookshow** #1 (of 5). The title does nothing for me, but the creative line up does: Gene Colan art on **Evil Zombie**, Dan Breton pin-up page, Keiron Dwyer draws super spy El Superbeasto and Will Conrad and Eddy Barro bring to life **The House of 1,000 Corpses**. It's Halloween; there are monsters loose. Protect yourself and buy this comic. **Sales 2/5 Quality 5/5**

With 21 years of comics retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his **Illuminations** monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.

Ultimate X-Men 38 (*Blockbuster* 5 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) A wounded Wolverine is taken to the X-Mansion to prevent further attacks from his unknown assailants. \$2.25

Weapon X 14 (Frank Tieri & Georges Jeanty) This stand-alone story features the return of Mister Sinister. \$2.99

ON SALE FROM

OCT 15**Dark Horse**

new Berserk Vol 1: The Black Swordsman (Kentaro Miura) Guts is the bearer of a gigantic sword, an iron hand, and the scars of countless battles and tortures. Accompanied by Puck the Elf, more an annoyance than a companion, Guts relentlessly follows a dark, bloodstained path that leads only to death or vengeance. 224pg b&w \$13.95

Canon God Exaxtion 18 (Kenichi Sonoda) Hoichi is pretty cross at his grandfather, and will turn to some drastic, but short-lived measures to prove how angry he is over the killing of innocent civilians. Mature readers. b&w. \$2.99

Ghost in the Shell II: Man-Machine interface 9 (Masamune Shirow) Deep inside the electronic infinity of the enemy Decatonale supercomputer, cyber agent Motoko Aramaki plays hide-and-seek with the system's digital defences to get the root of the terrorist attacks plaguing Poseidon International. Mature readers. \$3.50

Hell 4 (Brian Augustyn & Todd Demong + Tim Kane) Things are heating up in Hell as human and beasts team up to march against the shadow-like Chimera who threaten to extinguish all life on the island. \$2.99

Hellboy: Weird Tales 5 (J.H. Williams III + Haden Blackman & Evan Dorkin + Scott Morse) While investigating reports of a goat man stalking a small town's Lover's Lane, Hellboy is teamed with a female Bureau agent whose obsession with monsters makes the World's Greatest Paranormal Investigator a little uneasy. \$2.99

Lone 2 (Stuart Moore & Jerome Opeña) "Welcome to Easy John's Fireworks Shack! We've got everything any inhabitant of the Western Wasteland would need, from supplies and rations to firearms and ammo!" \$2.99

one-shot Star Wars: Republic 59 (*Enemy Lines*, John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) Anakin Skywalker finds himself stranded behind enemy lines with the last person in the galaxy that he wants to be with: fellow Jedi A'Sharad Hett—from a Tusken Raider clan on their native Tatooine. \$2.99

DC Comics

Aquaman 11 (Rick Veitch & Yvel Guichet + Mark Propst) Aquaman rushes towards a climactic battle with his deadliest enemy, the Thirst, at the mythical Fountainhead—the source of the four rivers that bring all spiritual energy into our world. \$2.50

Arrowsmith 4 (of 6; Kurt Busiek & Carlos Pacheco + Jesús Meriño; *Cliffhanger*) In the thick of battle in the skies over Europe, Fletcher's illusions are shattered. \$2.95

Batman Adventures 7 (Dan Slott + Ty Templeton & Rick Burchett + Terry Beatty) While Batman's off spying on Gotham's mobsters, it's up to Batgirl

to face the deadly Phantasm all on her lonesome. \$2.25

Batman: Gotham Knights 46 (Scott Beatty + Will Pfeifer & Roger Robinson + Brent Anderson) Released after eight years in prison, Batman's old foe The Spook is ready to do whatever it takes to avoid the Dark Knight. 40pg \$2.75

one-shot Batman: Terror (Doug Moench & Paul Gulacy + Jimmy Palmiotti; tpbk) With the Scarecrow by his side, Strange is determined to break Batman's will once and for all. 128pg \$12.95

Gotham Central 12 (Greg Rucka & Michael Lark) A sniper strikes, creating a tense and deadly situation for the detectives of the MCU. And while the cops race to stop the killer, they must also help maintain calm among Gotham's citizens. \$2.50

Human Target 3 (*The Unshredded Man* 2 of 2; Peter Milligan & Javier Pulido; *Vertigo*) John Matthews faked his own death on 9/11 to escape corporate scandal, but now his past has caught up with him, and his former employers are holding his wife hostage. Mature readers. \$2.95

JLA-Z #2 (of 3; Mike McAvannie & Kevin Maguire + various) A handbook to DC's superteam featuring artwork by some of the biggest names in comics, timed to coincide with "the inter-company crossover of the decade". \$2.50

JSA 53 (Geoff Johns & Don Kramer + Keith Champagne) Wildcat comes face-to-face with the new Crimson Avenger and is confronted by a past crime he had hoped to forget. \$2.50

new Kamikaze 1 (of 5; Humberto Ramos + Olallo Rubio & Francisco Herrera + Carlos Cuevas; *Cliffhanger*) Following the murder of their guru Stone, extreme sports crew Zyon, Andy, Tyra, and Tisha must piece together a mystery that may just put them in the middle of the deadly sport known as Kamikaze. \$2.95

Lobo Unbound 5 (of 6; Keith Giffen & Alex Horley + Andy Kuhn) Find out what's so special about Dhabba Dhu, the world Lobo now reluctantly rules. Mature readers. \$2.95

Lucifer 43 (*Brothers in Arms* 2 of 3; Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly) When the titans besiege Heaven, help comes from the most unexpected and unwelcome quarter. Mature. \$2.50

The Powerpuff Girls 43 (Ivan Velez Jr. & Christopher Cook + Mike Decarlo) When gigantic aliens pick Townsville Park for a family outing, fighting them is no picnic! \$2.25

Nightwing 86 (Devin Grayson & Patrick Zircher + Andy Owens) Cyber-Punks, street bikes and machine guns are just the beginning of Dick Grayson's troubles. \$2.25

Robin 119 (Jon Lewis & Pete Woods + Andrew Pepoy) Possessing information that will affect the very existence of Gotham, Robin races against time to learn who will set in motion a series of violent events. \$2.25

one-shot The Sandman Presents: Taller Tales (various; *Vertigo*; tpbk) Collecting assorted tales of the Dreaming, originally presented in *The Sandman Presents* Merv Pumpkinhead, Agent of D.R.E.A.M., *The Sandman Presents: Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Dreams ... But Were Afraid To Ask* #1, *The Dreaming* #55 and the four-issue miniseries *The Sandman Presents: The Thessaliad*. Mature readers. 224pg \$19.95

Smax 3 (of 5; Alan Moore & Zander Cannon + Andrew Currie; *America's Best Comics*) Jeff Smax, back on his home planet for the funeral of his beloved Uncle Mack, is confronted by the dragons of his past. \$2.95

Superman/Batman 3 (Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Dexter Vines) Superman and Batman are on the run, and the price on their heads has brought out some of the world's deadliest villains! \$2.95

Superman: Metropolis 9 (of 12; Chuck Austen & Teddy Kristiansen) The Creeper and Jimmy Olsen try to stop the carnage as Metropolis is plunged into a power failure! \$2.95

Teen Titans 4 (Geoff Johns & Mike McKone + Marlo Alquiza) The new Teen Titans disobey a direct order from their elders and go on a hunt for the hunter. \$2.50

new Thundercats: Hammerhand's Revenge 1 (of 5; Fiona Avery & Carlos D'anda; *WildStorm*) The Berserkers, once defeated by the Thundercats, have returned—and they want vengeance! \$2.95

Y: The Last Man 16 (*Comedy & Tragedy* 1 of 2; Brian K. Vaughan & Paul Chadwick + José Marzan Jr.) What might

art and entertainment be like in a world without men? The female performers of the Fish & Bicycle Traveling Theater Company are here to show you. Mature readers. \$2.95

Marvel

one-shot Agent X 15 (Gail Simone & Udon) It's the end of the road for Agent X, but could that ending mean a new beginning for the long-lost merc known as Deadpool? \$2.99

Amazing Spider-Man Vol 5 (J. Michael Straczynski + Fiona Avery & John Romita Jr.; tpbk) As Peter deals with matters of the heart, his web-swinging alter ego faces dangers lurking behind every corner, and calls upon all his astonishing abilities to make it out alive! Collects *Amazing Spider-Man* #51-58. 192pg \$17.99

Captain Marvel 15 (Peter David & Paul Azaceta) With an intergalactic empire headed by the Shi'ar and the Kree on the verge of conquering the galaxy, Captain Marvel gives them seven days to get their affairs in order, because he's going to kill them all! \$2.99

Crew 6 (*Big Trouble in Little Mogadishu* 6 of 7; Priest & Joe Bennett) It's time for The Crew to take it to the streets and strike back—assuming that they can trust one another. \$2.99

Daredevil 53 (David Mack) Echo goes on a Native American vision quest to pick up the pieces of her life. Her whole life was defined by her misconception of the Kingpin as a hero and Daredevil as a villain. Can she get her world back in order? \$2.99

Exiles 36 (*Fantastic Voyage* 2 of 3; Judd Winnick & Clayton Henry) The Exiles encounter an alternate world version of the Fantastic Four. \$2.99

Gun Theory 3 (of 4; Daniel Way & Jon Proctor) The phone rings, and killer-for-hire Harvey embarks on another hit. But nothing's going right this job. Mature readers. \$2.50

new Hulk: Gray 1 (of 6; Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) A tale of the Incredible Hulk before he was even green! \$3.50

Marvel Masterworks: The Amazing Spider-Man Vol 3 (various) Spider-Man's earliest adventures continue.

Collects *Amazing Spider-Man Vol 1* #20-30 and *Annual 2*. 272pg. \$49.99

Mystique 7 (*Tinker, Tailor, Mutant, Spy* 1 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Michael Ryan) Mystique's new assignment from Xavier is to track down a possible new biological weapon: mutant anthrax that spreads telepathically. \$2.99

New Mutants 6 (Christina Weir & Nunzio DeFilippis + Keron Grant) In the ultimate showdown with the Reavers, the New Mutants put their powers to the test and discover a potential new teammate. \$2.50

New X-Men 148 (*Planet X* #3 of 5; Grant Morrison & Phil Jimenez) The shocking mystery threat revealed in issue 146 continues to take its toll upon Professor Xavier and the X-Men. \$2.25

New X-Men Vol 5: Assault on Weapon Plus (Grant Morrison & Chris Bachalo; tpbk) Wolverine, Cyclops and the enigmatic mutant known as Fantomex travel to the other side of the world and beyond in search of the keys to their pasts. Collects *New X-Men* #139-145. 160pg. \$14.99

Trouble 4 (of 5; Mark Millar & Terry Dodson) Ben, May, Mary & Richard continue to deal with the ramifications of their summer flings, including the one decision no teenage girl wants to face! \$2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 48 (*Unfair* 2 of 6; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) The Kingpin of Crime is back—and he's got vengeance on his mind, commanding the entire Underworld to find out who Spider-Man really is. \$2.25

Uncanny X-Men 432 (*The Draco* 4 of 6; Chuck Austen & Philip Tan) Nightcrawler takes one step closer to discovering the true origins of his family. \$2.25

Venom 6 (Daniel Way & Paco Medina) On the loose from an Arctic research facility and pursued by a mysterious alien agent, Venom on the way to civilisation. \$2.25

Wolverine 6 (*So, This Priest Walks Into A Bar...*; Greg Rucka & Darick Robertson) Self-contained issue featuring Nightcrawler. \$2.25

X-Treme X-Men 32 (*Infinita* 2 of 5; Chris Claremont & Igor Kordey) As the X-Treme team gets closer to the heart of Infinita, they realise that there is more to this mutant dilemma than they previously thought. \$2.99

X-Treme X-Men Vol 5: God Loves, Man Kills (Chris Claremont & Igor Kordey + Brent Anderson; tpbk) The Anti-Mutant Movement leader Stryker has returned and it's up to the X-Treme team to make sure his hatred of mutants does not lead to more deaths. Collects *X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills* Gn, *X-Treme X-Men* #25-30. 216pg. \$19.99

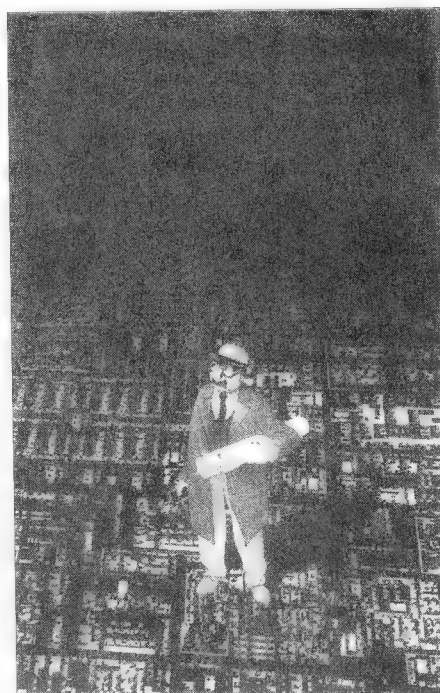
ON SALE FROM

OCT 22**Dark Horse**

Al Capp's Li'l Abner: The Frazetta Sundays Vol 3 (1958-59) (Frank Frazetta; tpbk) Collects the Sunday strips from 1958 to 1959. Ever wonder what shiftless hillbilly Li'l Abner does for a living? 128pg \$18.95

Buffy the Vampire Slayer 62 (*Stake to the Heart* 3 of 4; Fabian Nicieza & Scott Lobdell + Cliff Richards) Buffy is dealing with a horror she is powerless to stop—the divorce of her parents. In a failed attempt to alleviate Buffy's anxiety, Angel has unwittingly unleashed the Malignancy Demons upon her and her family. Photo variant cover. \$2.99

new Crush 1 (Jason Hall & Sean Murphy) In a world of subtle horrors Elizabeth Crush is about to meet

**close-up****Dead Memory**

Dark Horse

Writer/Artist: Marc-Antoine Mathieu

Allegorical study of a Kafka-esque society under the control of real-time information and a thoughtful treatise on cities, walls, languages and other elements that both define and confine humanity. Beautifully illustrated in high-contrast black and white, and published in an oversized hardcover format. 64pg b&w \$14.95

ON SALE OCTOBER 22

one monster she never counted on — herself! \$2.99

one-shot **Dead Memory** (Marc-Antoine Mathieu; hbk) See *Close-Up* on previous page.

The Goon 3 (Eric Powell) Find out how the Goon and Franky became best pals, and how they muscled their way into the rackets of big-time crime boss, Labrazio — who, incidentally, nobody's seen for a while. \$2.99

Usagi Yojimbo 70 (Stan Sakai) Usagi and Jotaro are trapped in an isolated fishing cabin with Yagi — the badly wounded renegade assassin known as Lone Goat — and his young son, Gorogoro 24pg b&w \$2.99

one-shot **Violent Cases** (Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean; tpbk) After dislocating his arm, a young boy is taken to see a doctor — an aged osteopath who was once the doctor of legendary gangster Al Capone 48pg \$14.95

DC Comics

one-shot **21 Down** (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Jesus Saiz + Palmiotti; *WildStorm*; tpbk) See *Close-Up* right.

The Atom Archives Vol 2 (Gardner Fox & Gil Kane + Murphy Anderson; hbk) Reprints *The Atom* #6-13, featuring Mighty Mite's early team-ups with Hawkman and Hawkgirl, the classic villainy of Dr Light, the return of Chronos, and more. 216pg \$49.95

Avengers/JLA 2 (of 4; Kurt Busiek & George Pérez) The titanic team-up continues as the threats that brought the heroes together in the first issue tear the teams apart! 48pg \$5.95

Batgirl 45 (Dylan Horrocks & Rick Leonardi + Jesse Delperdang) A mysterious new pill called Soul has hit the streets of Gotham — a pill that unleashes a user's innermost desires and demons. \$2.50

Batman 620 (*Broken City* 1 of 6; Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso) A dead girl's body is found in a Gotham Landfill, and the discovery sends Batman on a journey of self-examination that pits him against the Joker, Killer Croc and more. \$2.25

Birds of Prey 60 (Gail Simone & Ed Benes + Alex Lei) A powerful US senator who fell victim to Savant contacts the Clocktower demanding a meeting with Oracle. But she's not there, and a wounded Canary is at the desk. \$2.50

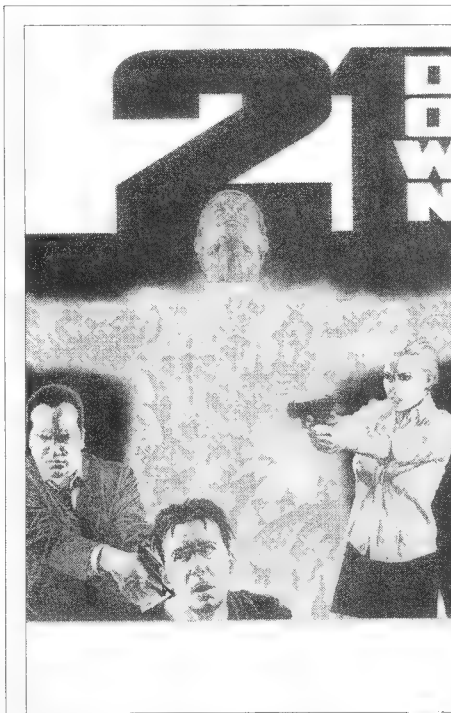
Cinnamon: El Cielo 3 (of 5; Jen Van Meter & Francisco Paronzi + Robert Campanella) On the bad streets of South Central LA, a legendary tough girl comes face to face with the six-gun drifter who shot her father, Cinnamon. \$2.50

Heliblazer 189 (*Staring at the Wall* 1 of 5; Mike Carey & Marcelo Frusin; *Vertigo*) Back from his world tour, John prepares for the apocalyptic arrival of the shadow dog — and he's planning to meet it in force. Mature readers. \$2.75

one-shot **H-E-R-O: Powers and Abilities** (Will Pfeifer & Kano; tpbk) What if you found a device that gave you such superhuman power? *Powers and Abilities* explores what three ordinary people would do in such a situation. 144pg \$9.95

ICandy 2 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Kalman Andrasofszky) Young Matt and his sister Candy, who's become a real-life video game heroine, are on the run from everyone: the police, their parents and even Korben, a mysterious government operative assigned to capture them. \$2.50

Looney Tunes Back in Action: The Movie (Bill Matheny & David Alvarez + Duendes Studio) Bugs Bunny



and Daffy Duck team up for a madcap global mission to find a mysterious gem called the Blue Monkey. 56pg \$3.95

The Losers 5 (Andy Diggle & Jock; *Vertigo*) They're trapped and outgunned on enemy ground, but the Losers still have one hell of an ace up their sleeve: the most powerful non-nuclear weapon in America's arsenal! Mature. \$2.95

Outsiders 5 (Judd Winick & Chris Cross + Sean Parsons) The Outsiders uncover Brother Blood's insidious plot to take over the world, but Blood's monks are one step ahead of them, leaving a gruesome trail of bodies in their wake. \$2.50

Planetary 17 (Warren Ellis & John Cassaday; *WildStorm*) It's 1933 and Elijah Snow floats downriver towards a golden city shrouded by the immense jungle. After encountering a dashing figure, a man raised by animals, Snow meets a brilliant and harmonious people — and one of the great loves of his life. \$2.95

The Possessed 4 (of 6; Geoff Johns + Kris Grimmer + Liam Sharp; *Cliffhanger*) What does a rash of possessions mean? Why are they happening? And what horrific event will result from them? Mature. \$2.95

Promethea 28 (Alan Moore & J.H. Williams III + Mick Gray; *America's Best Comics*) After three years on the run in Millennium City, Promethea returns to New York to commence the apocalypse and is reunited with her mother, Jack Faust, Stacia, and others from her past. \$2.95

Reign of the Zodiac 3 (Keith Giffen & Colleen Doran + Bob Wiacek) The disappearance of Na'ia and P'etor sends a shockwave through all Eidolon as a lone diplomat tries to head off the political conflagration it's caused. \$2.75

one-shot **Sgt Rock: Between Hell and a Hard Place** (Brian Azzarello & Joe Kubert; *Vertigo*; hbk) When four German prisoners of the Easy Company are slaughtered, Rock must find the killer and keep his men alive. Mature readers. 144pg \$24.95

Sleeper 10 (Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips; *WildStorm*) Holden Carver, along with his two closest allies on the wrong side of the law, go on an extremely dangerous mission — one that will cost one of them their life. Mature readers. \$2.95

close-up

21 Down

WildStorm

Writers: Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray

Artists: Jesus Saiz
Jimmy Palmiotti

Collects the miniseries introducing 20-year old tattoo artist Preston Kills, an unlikely hero with the ability to touch someone and see the moments before and after their death. However, Preston is blindsided by a sexy FBI agent who claims to be looking for anyone related to Herod — the very man who gave Preston his power. 176pg \$19.95

ON SALE OCTOBER 22

Superman 198 (Steven T. Seagle & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) Bizarro falls victim to a mysterious Kryptonian disease that has affected Superman and Supergirl. But he ain't feeling better! \$2.25

Terra Obscura 5 (of 6; Alan Moore + Peter Hogan + Yanick Paquette + Karl Story; *America's Best Comics*) The pieces fall into place as the heroes draw near the Grand Canyon. \$2.95

Wildcats Version 3.0 #15 (Joe Casey & Dustin Nguyen + Richard Friend; *WildStorm*) As Spartan prepares to unleash the Halo car onto an unsuspecting world, a still-crippled Grifter discovers a new way to stay in the gunfighter game involving the initials M.M.! Mature readers. \$2.95

Wonder Woman 197 (*Down to Earth* 2 of 5; Greg Rucka & Drew Johnson + Ray Snyder) Touring to promote her long-anticipated project, Diana encounters a raging forest fire — but why does she refuse the help of the Fastest Man Alive? \$2.25

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 500 (J. Michael Straczynski & John Romita Jr. + John Romita Sr.) It's Peter Parker's birthday, but how do you throw a surprise party for someone with a Spider-sense? Someone figures out how and Spidey spends his special day looking back at his career and every villain he's faced over those years — against his will. 48pg \$3.50

Avengers 74 (*Search For She-Hulk* 3 of 4; Geoff Johns & Scott Kolins) While the Avengers continue to search the globe for her, Jennifer Walters seeks the one person on Earth who can help control her transformations. \$2.25

Avengers Vol 2: Red Zone (Geoff Johns & Olivier Coipel + Ivan Reis; tpbk) A deadly chemical agent is released over Mount Rushmore, and rapidly spreads through the surrounding countryside! Is this a terrorist attack on American soil? Collects *Avengers* #64-70 160pg \$14.99

Daredevil Vol 7: Hardcore (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev; tpbk) Daredevil is simultaneously faced with murder charges, a new girlfriend, being outed by the tabloids, the return of one of his deadliest foes' Typhoid Mary, and the Kingpin's attempt to restore his

fallen empire. Collects *Daredevil* #46-50. 128pg \$13.99

Fantastic Four 505 (*Authoritative Action* 3 of 6; Mark Waid & Howard Porter) As American forces mass on the border of Latveria, the Fantastic Four are named traitors to the United States! \$2.25

new Hawkeye 1 (Fabian Nicieza & Stefano Raffaele) Clint Barton's travels in search of the world's best chilli take Hawkeye out of spandex and into the real world problems of real world losers. \$2.99

Inhumans 6 (*Culture Shock* 3 of 3; Sean McKeever & Matthew Clark) Just as the Inhumans start to find their place on Earth, one of their own makes a choice that could turn humanity against them. \$2.50

Punisher 34 (*Confederacy of Dunces* 2 of 5; Garth Ennis & John McCrea) It might be The Punisher's final hour as Daredevil, Spider-Man, and Wolverine team up to bring Frank Castle's killing spree to an end. \$2.99

Sentinel 8 (*No Hero* 2 of 3; Sean McKeever & Udon) In the aftermath of the events of the first story arc, Justin must decide his next move! But has the Marvel Universe given birth to a new hero ... or to a monster? \$2.50

Weapon X #15 (Frank Tieri & Georges Jeanty) An X-Man joins the Weapon X team in this start of a new story arc. \$2.99

X-Statix 15 (*Di Another Day* 3 of 5; Peter Milligan & Mike Allred) Princess Diana is back from the dead and on her comeback tour — and driving the X-Statix crazy. \$2.99

ON SALE FROM

OCT 29

Dark Horse

Galactic 3 (Jim Krueger & Sanford Greene + Greg Adams) Heath and the rest of the Galactic team must travel to the surface of a hostile, death-filled planet and determine whether it's worth saving or better off being destroyed. \$2.99

Mac Raboy's Flash Gordon Vol 4 (Mac Raboy; tpbk) Ming the Merciless, the traitorous Klag, a mysterious

creature known as The Mind, and a host of villains and dangers oppose the hardy, heroic Flash in a reprint series that marks the first time that Mac Raboy's run on this acclaimed strip has ever been collected. 256pg b&w \$19.95

one-shot **Star Wars: Jedi - Dooku** (John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) Posing as a renegade from the Republic, Jedi Quinlan Vos has been given the assignment to earn Dooku's trust and learn his secrets. 48pg \$4.99

Ultraman Tiga 3 (of 10; Tony Wong & Khoo Fuk Lung) Monster-fighting, sci-fi superhero from the stars, Ultraman Tiga, goes toe to toe with a pair of terrifying beasts that have staked out our planet for destruction. 40pg \$3.99

DC Comics

one-shot **Batman/Joker: Switch** (Devin Grayson & John Bolton) The Joker awakens drugged and confused on the streets of London — and he's undergone a shocking transformation! 64pg \$6.95

one-shot **Batman / Superman: World's Finest** (Karl Kesel & various; tpbk) Superman and Batman meet once a year to commemorate a tragic event. See how their worlds have evolved over the years! Collects the miniseries. 288pg \$19.95

new **Caper 1** (Judd Winick & Farel Dalrymple) Telling the tale of Izzy and Jacob Weiss, brothers and co-workers for San Francisco's Jewish Mafia. They've done the dirtiest work for years, but this time, their Boss may have pushed them too far! \$2.95

Cartoon Cartoons 23 (various) Boy genius Dexter goes to the bottom of the sea, IM Baboon literally cooks up trouble, and Courage the Cowardly Dog battles a house-eating robot! \$2.25

Catwoman 24 (Ed Brubaker & Cameron Stewart) A recent threat is explained while new questions are raised. \$2.50

Crisis on Multiple Earths Vol 2 (Gardner Fox & Dennis O'Neil & various; tpbk) Collects *JLA* #55-56, #64-65, #72-73, #83-84 plus an introduction by Martin Pasko and a new cover painting by Jerry Ordway. 208pg \$14.95

Empire 4 (of 6; Mark Waid & Barry Kitson + James Pascoe) Treachery abounds among Golgoth's twisted Chiefs of Staff, and we learn more about the one secret no one dares ask about in the empire. What happened to Golgoth's wife? Mature readers. \$2.50

The Flash 203 (*Ignition* 3 of 6; Geoff Johns & Alberto Sosa) As The Flash attempts to come to grips with his new identity, a new Rogue announces his presence in Keystone City. \$2.25

Green Lantern 170 (Ben Raab & Rick Burchett + Rodney Ramos) Green Lantern has been trying to restore order to Sector 2814, but that doesn't mean that life on Earth has stood still. \$2.25

JLA 89 (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The JLA's "Trial By Fire" concludes with the brawl to end them all — Plastic Man versus The Burning amidst the wreckage of an atomic blast! \$2.25

The Legion 25 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & various) Kicking off the landmark six-part story "Foundations" that brings Superboy into the Legion! Part 1 Kicks off in Smallville, where a young Clark Kent is confronted by three oddly dressed teens ... but by the end, a dead hero will have returned, a young man will have found his destiny, and an apocalyptic darkness prophesied in "Dream Crime" will have reared its ugly head! For more information, see the feature article. 48pg \$3.95

Marvel

Earth X Vol 5: Paradise X Book II (Jim Krueger & Alex Ross + Doug Braithwaite; tpbk) Will the heroes of Earth be able to solve the problems of the Paradise they helped create? Collects Paradise X #6-12, Ragnorak, Devils, A & X. 336pg \$29.99

One-shot The Essential Tomb of Dracula

Vol 1 (Marv Wolfman & Gene Colan; tpbk) Dracula first appeared in the Marvel Universe in the 1970s — and Tomb of Dracula lasted seven years. This volume collects the first 25 issues, plus Werewolf by Night #15 and Giant-Size Chillers #1156pg b&w \$14.99

The Eternal 5 (Chuck Austen & Kev Walker) The final confrontation between Eternals and Celestials grows closer. Mature readers. \$2.99

Hulk: Gray 2 (of 6; Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) A tale of the Incredible Hulk before he was green. \$3.50

Hulk: Nightmerica 5 (of 6; Robin Laws & Brian Ashmore) Perhaps, at long last, in the depths of the Nightmerica Compound, that long sought cure may have finally been found for Bruce Banner. \$2.99

Marvel Mangaverse Vol 4: X-Men — Ronin (J. Torres & Makoto Nakatsuka; tpbk) Wolverine, Cyclops and Storm face off against the White Queen and the all-new Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. Collects X-Men: Ronin #1-5 128pg \$13.99

Mystique 8 (Tinker, Tailor, Mutant, Spy 2 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Michael Ryan) Mystique's new assignment from Xavier is to track down a possible new biological weapon: Mutant anthrax that spreads telepathically. \$2.99

Namor 8 (Andi Watson & Bill Jemas + Pat Olliffe) Observe the mounting culture clash between Atlantis and the landlubbers, with star-crossed lovers Sandy and Prince Namor caught in the middle! \$2.99

Silver Surfer 4 (Communion 4 of 6; Stacy Weiss & Dan Chariton & Milx) Is the Silver Surfer constructing the means of mankind's survival, or the weapon of its ultimate destruction? \$2.25

Thor: Vikings 4 (of 5; Garth Ennis & Glenn Fabry; Max Comics) Thor and Dr Strange go back through time to gather a force to face the Zombie Vikings! Mature readers. \$3.50

Venom 7 (Daniel Way & Paco Medina) Hungry and craving adrenaline, Venom sets his sights on a tasty little snack — a short, hairy Canadian guy with a bad temper. \$2.25

X-Treme X-Men 33 (Intifada 3 of 5; Chris Claremont & Igor Kordey) As the X-Treme team members get closer to the heart of Intifada, they realise that there is more to this mutant dilemma than they thought! \$2.99

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

OCTOBER

Aardvark Vanaheim

Cerebus 295 (Latter Days 29 of 35; Dave Sim & Gerhard) Cerebus continues to be supremely aggravated by Le Sanctuaire de Ricket Joanne Lesbiennes de Upper Felda. 24pg b&w \$2.25

Cerebus Volume 15: Latter Days (Dave Sim & Gerhard; tpbk) Collection from this final story-arc Includes *This Aardvark*, *This Shepherd*, as well as *The Three Wise Fellows*, *Moshie*, *Loshi*, and *Koshie*. b&w \$30.00

Abstract Studios

One-shot Strangers in Paradise

Sourcebook (Terry Moore & Trey Moore) Featuring character bios and fact sheets on all the major characters, from Francine and Katchoo to Veronica and Griffin Silver. 24pg b&w \$2.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Charm School 9 (Elizabeth Watasin) Fairer than the Fairest of Faerie beats up Dean and takes her girlfriend. You know you're not butch enough if someone who lives in a forest can kick your ass. Mature readers. 24pg b&w \$2.95

One-shot The City Vol 1

(Derf; tpbk) Provocative, biting, controversial, and tasteless, Derf slices and dices the modern zeitgeist with unrestrained abandon. 144pg b&w \$10.95

Hsu and Chan 4 (Norm Scott) Join the throngs weeping bittersweet tears of joy as Hsu and Chan continue their cartoony escapades. 24pg b&w \$2.95

One-shot Punch and Judy: A Grand Guignol

(Christopher P. Reilly + Jorge Santillan & Darron Laessig; graphic novel) Mr Punch makes it his mission to ruin Christmas for Earth's last two good children. Learn about Punch's troubled childhood and the shocking truth he discovers about Christmas. 48pg b&w \$6.95

new Serenity Rose 1

(Aaron A.) Stare at Ms Serenity Rose, local witch, as she spends the day dodging goblins, Goths, and a bad case of social phobia in the spookiest town in America. 24pg b&w \$2.95

Skaggy the Lost 4 (Igor Baranko) When Vikings landed in Mayan Central America in search of gold and fame, they weren't ready to contend with Mayan magic, not even the berserk-prone Skaggy! Mature readers. 40pg b&w \$3.50

Antarctic Press

One-shot AP Chillers

(various) Featuring

a brand new GD-18 vignette by Fred Perry and stories by Rod Espinosa, Craig Babiar, Brian Denham, Sherard Jackson, and more. 48pg b&w \$3.95

Gold Digger 46 (Fred Perry) With Brianna captured by the followers of the Copper Dragon clan, the Iron Dragons have convinced Gina to help them enter the Coppers' territory on a rescue mission \$2.99

How to Draw Manga 26 (various) Comprehensive guide in mastering the manga style, emphasising different aspects each issue. b&w \$4.95

Junction 17 #4 (of 4; David Hutchison) It's a race against time as Chen and Jones fight to save the killer's final target. \$2.99

Luftwaffe: 1946 #13 (Ted Nomura & various) The Nazis introduce their V-3 and V-4 weapons as a prelude to attacking America. 48pg b&w \$5.95

Mangazine 48 (various) Ninja High School, Families of Altered Wars, Gold Digger, and Warrior Nun Areala, together in one title every month. 150pg \$9.99

Neotopia Vol 2 #4 (of 6; Rod Espinosa) Heavily damaged by the pursuing armada of General Kaizler, the Intrepid Explorer Mak'ing landfill, and Nalyn and her crew discover they've arrived at Shielliniath, a continent thick with forests. \$2.99

Ninja High School 110 (Katie Ba'r) Yumel has been forced into the role of Juliet, and Romeo is her hated rival! To make matters worse, all her enemies want to be in the act too. b&w \$3.50

Posefile Monthly 3 (various) Hundreds of pictures of dynamic poses, costumes, and props. 48pg b&w \$4.95

new Rehd 1

(Sam Lotfi) Enter Akonite, the Dark Envoy, whose pursuits drive him to the ancient ruins of Akashia in search of refutations. Meanwhile, Emperor Allatius of the Crescent is betrayed to the arcane organisation whose name is fearfully whispered: Rehd! b&w \$2.99

Shoujo 3 (various) This series features a collection of powerful stories from Katie Bair, and a variety of other original tales by a variety of other authors. 48pg b&w \$5.95

Warrior Nun Areala 21 (Craig Babiar) Areala and Straw Jack are locked in mortal combat. The battle rages on as lives hang precariously in the balance. b&w \$3.50

One-shot You Can Draw Monsters

(various) Halloween-tailored How to Draw special — a volume focusing exclusively on monsters and the macabre. 192pg b&w \$19.95

Archie Comics

Archie 542 (Craig Boldman & Stan Goldberg) Archie and Reggie decide to date Veronica in short shifts. \$2.19

Archie & Friends 77 (Mike Pellowski & Rex Lindsey) When Archie displays astonishing feats of extra-sensory perception, Riverdale High enters him in the State Science Fair. \$2.19

Betty 132 (Kathleen Webb & Stan Goldberg) A cleanup of Betty's closet takes her down memory lane. \$2.19

Betty & Veronica 194 (Kathleen Webb & Jeff Shultz) Time moves at different speeds for Betty and Veronica as they approach the week with differing goals... and differing results. \$2.19

Betty & Veronica Spectacular 63 (Dan Parent) When Betty has to watch her aunt's cute dog, Veronica suffers from attent on deficit! \$2.19

Holiday Fun Digest 8 (various) Christmas classics of old are re-presented along with new yuletide tales. \$2.39

Sabrina the Teenage Witch 51 (Bill Goliher & Holly Golightly) When Sabrina borrows one of Aunt Zelda's necklaces without asking, she doesn't realise she's wearing a Dreamstone Necklace, which magically transforms and transports her into whatever and wherever she's dreaming. \$2.19

Sonic the Hedgehog 129 (Romy Chacon + Dawn Best & Jim Amash) Sonic puts the pedal to the metal by entering a racing competition. \$2.19

Veronica 146 (Dan Parent) While organising the family heirlooms, Veronica finds a charm bracelet. Once she puts it on, she can't help dreaming of the past — which helps her add chapters to the book she's writing! \$2.19

Avatar Press

Alan Moore's Yuggoth Cultures 2 (of 3; Alan Moore & various) Includes two long lost collaborations with Bryan Talbot, the classic Itchy Peterson story

illustrated by Val Semieks, a short story drawn by Mike Woller, and another Lovecraftian story from the aborted novel Yuggoth Cultures. 40pg b&w \$3.95

Frank Miller's Robocop 4 (of 9; Frank Miller & Steven Grant + Juan Jose Ryp) OCP has cut the cops down to size, turned Robocop's programming totally insane, and has mad assault teams dealing out lethal force on the streets! Variant cover \$3.50

One-shot Hellina vs Pandora

Preview (Doug Miers & Rafa Lopez) The battle for all of Hell and Earth starts right here! Avatar's greatest female warriors get sucked into the biggest conflict ever, one for control of Hell itself. Mature readers. 16pg b&w \$1.99

new Joe R. Lansdale's The Drive-In 1

(of 4; Joe Lansdale & Andres Guinaldo) 10 years in the making, this comicbook adaptation is true to the original novel. When a group of friends decides to spend a day at the world's largest Drive-In theatre horror fest, they expected to see tons of bloody murders, rampaging madmen, and mayhem — but only on the screen. Mature readers. b&w \$3.50

Bongo Comics

Barth Simpson 14 (Rogers + Bates & Costanza + Majoros) With a little help from Professor Frink, Barth meets up with his parents at Springfield Elementary in 1969. \$2.99

Simpsons Comics 87 (Boothby & Lloyd) *Hail to the Cat*, the story of how one political animal took on city hall and won. \$2.99

CG Entertainment

Brath 9 (Chuck Dixon & Andrea Di Vito + Roland Paris) Battling man and beast, can the Hammer of Ure defeat all — or will the coliseum sands run crimson with his own blood? \$2.95

One-shot Brath Traveler Vol 1: Hammer of Vengeance

(Chuck Dixon & Andrea Di Vito + John Dell) Outnumbered and out armed, can warrior Brath Mac Gare possibly lead his barbarian clan to victory against an endless enemy? 192pg \$9.95

Brian Pulido's Lady Death: A Medieval Tale 9 (Brian Pulido & Fabrizio Fiorentino + Ted Pertzborn) On dangerous ground, Lady Death and Wolf discover a rebel group dedicated to overthrowing the iron rule of the Eldritch! \$2.95

The Crossovers 10 (Robert Rodi & Joe Staton + Ernie Colon) Meet Aunt Cartimandua, aka the sorceress supreme! She's sweeping half the clan off on an other-dimensional quest, leaving the others behind to face unexpected perils! \$2.95

Crux 31 (Chuck Dixon & Paul Ryan + Rob Hunter) The tearful reunions are over, but can the once-great nation rebuild — and rule — this brave new world? \$2.95

Don Bluth's Dragon's Lair 3 (of 6; Andy Mangels & Fabio Laguna + Tony Washington) Within the Graveyard of Gloom, Dirk the Daring faces sabre-rattling skeletons, ghoulish crypt creeps and the flesh seeking undead. \$2.95

Don Bluth's Space Ace 3 (of 6; Robert Kirkman & Paulo Borges + Pat Duke) Trapped on a planet of junk, Ace keeps randomly transforming into young Dexter and elderly Old Ace! \$2.95

El Cazador 2 (Chuck Dixon & Steve Epting + Nick Bell) Now that they've sobered up, will Captain Sin have to battle her own crew? If so, can she survive an onslaught by entire ship of pirates? \$2.95



close-up

Ruse: Archard's Agents — the Case of the Puzzled Pugilist

CG Entertainment

Writer: Chuck Dixon

Artists: Mike Perkins + Laura Martin

Here it is — a two-fisted one-shot from the pages of Ruse, penned by Chuck Dixon. Foul murder has fallen across a country estate — but Simon Archard is nowhere to be found. Now it's up to pugilistic Pete to capture the criminal. But can a punch-drunk plugger become a mater sleuth? \$2.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

The First 36 (Barbara Kesel & Ron Wagner) With the barrier between their two Houses shattered, the First flee Elysia – and wage war on each other! ..\$2.95

John Carpenter's Snake Plissken Chronicles 3 (William O'Neill & Tone Rodriguez + Digital Chameleon) With Mr Marrs, the casino security and the local cops after Snake, our anti hero takes a joy ride that's going to take a few planks out of the Atlantic City boardwalk ..\$2.99

Meridian 41 (Barbara Kesel & Vincenzo Cucca + Don Hillsman II) What are the secrets of Sheristan? Alone in the darkness, can Sephie solve the hidden city's ancient mystery? ..\$2.95

Mystic 41 (Tony Bedard & Aaron Lopresti + Matt Ryan) Will Giselle lose her Sigil? First she stole Brath's mark of power – now Solusandra has come to Ciress seeking the source of our hero's magical might! ..\$2.95

Solus 8 (Barbara Kesel & Leonard Kirk + Andrew Pepoy) Solusandra and Lindy head to Ciress... home to a certain mistress of the magical arts.\$2.95

Negation 23 (Tony Bedard & Paul Pelletier + Dave Meikis) Javi used to hang with Kaine's crew, but now the ex surgeon has his own superpowered team – and he's going to use them to destroy his former friends ..\$2.95

Negation Vol 3: Hounded (Tony Bedard & Paul Pelletier + David Meikis: tpbk) Hunted by a relentless foe, can Obregon Kaine survive a planet that promises death to all who visit? Reprints Negation #13 18! 160pg ..\$15.95

The Path 20 (Ron Marz & Matthew Smith + Mark Pennington) The uprising against the mad Emperor Mitsumune begins as Obo-san leads his forces into battle.\$2.95

The Path Vol 3: Death and Dishonour (Ron Marz & Matthew Smith + Mark Pennington: tpbk) In a land of samurai, one monk challenges the gods! Honour-bound to protect his people, the only way Obo-san can save his nation is to rebel against its insane leader! Reprints The Path #13 18! 160pg ..\$15.95

new RobZombie's Spookshow international (of 5; various) Four tales. Witness the wrath of the Evil Zombie and two stories that made *House of 1,000 Corpses* a cult movie hit! Finally catch a tale of monsters, espionage, and strip clubs! Mature readers. 40pg ..\$3.50

Route 666 #17 (Tony Bedard & Karl Moline + Drew Geraci) Cassie and Cisco unravel the shocking secret of the fundamentalist farmers – and then confront the new dark spirit who may prove to be the worst kind of ally ..\$2.95

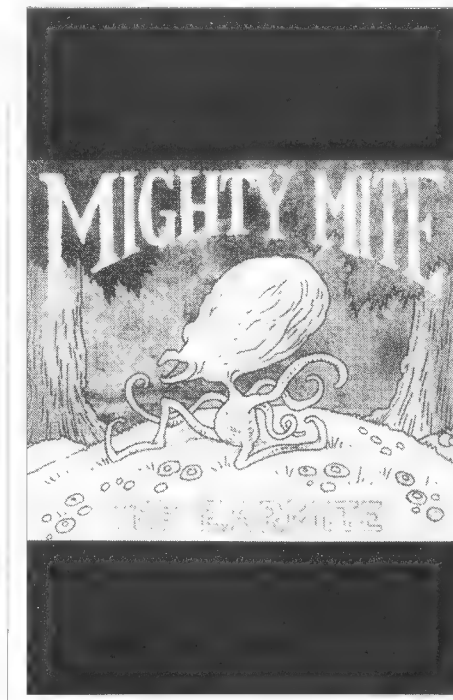
Route 666 Vol 2: Three-Ring Thriller (Tony Bedard & Karl Moline + Drew Geraci) The evil Adversary has sent his most powerful minions to destroy Cassie – and her only chance for survival is a family of circus freaks! Reprints Route 666 #7-12! 160pg ..\$15.95

Ruse 25 (Scott Beatty & Paul Ryan) Theophilus Dare returns – and transforms our detective duo into a troubleshooting trio.\$2.95

Ruse Traveler Vol 2: The Silent Partner (Mark Waid + Scott Beatty & Butch Guice + Mike Perkins) In times of trouble, the Victorian city of Partington looks to its favourite son. Simon Archard, the world's greatest sleuth! But Simon was once the apprentice of another detective – who's returned with a vengeance of climactic proportions! Reprints Ruse #7-12. 160pg ..\$9.95

one-shot Ruse: Archard's Agents – the Case of the Puzzled Pugilist (Chuck Dixon & Mike Perkins + Laura Martin) See *Close-Up* on previous page.

Scion 41 (Ian Edginton & Luke Ross + John Dell) The full-scale Tigris invasion begins as thousands of robotic shock



troops lay siege to the already bombarded Raven and Heron capitals ..\$2.95

Scion Traveler Vol 3: Divided Loyalties (Ron Marz & Jim Cheung + Don Hillsman II) In a world whose medieval culture melds with high tech, a young prince fights to liberate his world! Reprints Scion #15-21. 160pg ..\$9.95

Sigil 41 (Chuck Dixon & Dale Eaglesham + Andrew Hennessy) When Sam reunites with Zanni on her home world of Delassia, it should be a happy day. So why is no one smiling? ..\$2.95

Sojourn 28 (Ian Edginton & Greg Land + Jay Leisten) The good news: the uncharted island that Arwyn, Gareth and Cassidy are shipwrecked on has buried treasure. The bad news: it also has zombies.\$2.95

Sojourn Vol 4: The Thief's Tale (Ron Marz & Greg Land + Jay Leisten: tpbk) Arwyn and Gareth's quest to end the fiery reign of the undead warlord Mordath takes them deep into the deadly deserts of Quin! Reprinting Sojourn #19 24 160pg ..\$15.95

Way of the Rat 18 (Chuck Dixon & Jeff Johnson + Tom Ryder) Trapped in Old Mother's house by an army of evil ghosts, things get even worse for Boon and Po Po thanks to the arrival of Kung Kung Yi! ..\$2.95

DreamWave

Darkminds: Macropolis Volume 2 #2 (Chris Sarracini & Kwang Mook Lim) Nagawa is left for dead after a mad chain of events that could only happen in a city as twisted as Macropolis! Has the SIU hero finally taken his last breath? ..\$2.95

Megaman 2 (Brian Augustyn + Mic Fong & Stuart Ng) The strange robotic attacks on the city intensify, putting the entire populace at risk ..\$2.95

Necrowar 4 (Simon Furman & Adi Granov) In the aftermath of the bloody battle on Quo, the five members of Ebon Squad reflect on all they have lost. ..\$2.95

one-shot Shidima (various) This is the story of the only outsider ever to learn the secrets of Shidima's fighting arts, and the empire that would rise and crumble around him. Contains #1-7 of the series 176pg ..\$16.95

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 5 (various) Featuring a bold, new direction

for the acclaimed series, this is the beginning of what may be one of the most exciting adventures for those tenacious terrapins yet! ..\$2.95

Transformers: Armada 16 (various) The fabric of time and space is being slowly but surely torn apart, a super portal forming between realities – one that heralds the beginning of the end for the entire Armada dimension ..\$2.95

Transformers/G.I. Joe 3 (of 6, John Ney Rieber + Jae Lee & June Chung) Wounded, Snake Eyes stands alone against his nemesis Stormshadow, a horde of COBRA Vipers – and the deadly claws of the Deception panther, Ravage.\$2.95

Transformers: More Than Meets the Eye 7 (various) This issue features Ultra Magnus, the Terrorcons, and the Technobots, and all-new bios and art covering the evolution of some of Generation One's elite. 64pg ..\$5.25

Transformers: The War Within Volume 2 #1 (various) Optimus Prime and Megatron are missing, presumed dead, and the civil war for control of Cybertron has degenerated into a dark cauldron of confusion and turmoil, with splinter factions clashing in endless border skirmishes.\$2.95

El Capitan

Stray Bullets 36 (David Lapham) Travel back to a time of shoguns and warlords, of honour and swords, when skill and discipline were a way of life. Mature readers. b&w ..\$3.50

Fantagraphics

The Comics Journal 257 (various) Contains a collection of mostly unpublished conversations with Rick Griffin. Mature. 128pg b&w ..\$6.95

The Comics Journal Library Volume 3: R. Crumb (ed Milo George: hbk) Collects four long out-of-print interviews from the award-winning Comics Journal's archives in an oversized art-book format 120pg ..\$18.95

one-shot Mighty Mite (Tony Millionaire, hbk) See *Close Up*, above.

The Pogostick 2 (Ethan Persoff & Al Columbia) Featuring Haitian zombies and voodoo warlords, a cancer patient,

close-up

Mighty Mite

Fantagraphics Books

Writer/Artist: Tony Millionaire

From fan favourite Tony Millionaire comes a deceptively simple storytelling style. The left-hand pages tell Gabby's story – a lonely ape fleeing from the circus – while the right-hand pages illuminate the tale of Mighty Mite the earmite, a wandering hobo of an insect. Only Fantagraphics could come up with a dilly like this one, so we suggest you get your orders in pronto! ..\$6.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

sudden unemployment, the disadvantages of caller I.D., a horrible death, cops with guns and flashlights, an ambulance, fat garbage bags, a clean apartment, blood on a carpet, and more. Mature readers. 24pg ..\$4.95

Zippy Annual 2003 (Bill Griffith) Collects a year's worth of strips, including full-colour Sundays, and spotlights Zippy's ongoing love affair with Brand X America. 128pg b&w ..\$19.95

Image Comics

Age of Bronze 18 (Eric Shanower Quarterly ongoing series) Iphigenia, daughter of the army commander, doesn't realise that the jaws of death are closing around her. When Kalchas, the Trojan priest, reveals to the army that the gods require the girl's life, Achilles vows to save her or die. 24pg b&w ..\$3.50

Capes 2 (of 3; Robert Kirkman & Mark Englert) Bolt and company have their hands full when a jailbreak at the local penitentiary fills the streets of New York with supervillains! ..\$2.95

Casefiles: Sam and Twitch 6 (Marc Andreyko & Scott Morse) Will the tragedies inflicted on Det Williams destroy him, strengthen him or something far worse? ..\$2.50

Faction Paradox 2 (Lawrence Miles & Jim Calafiore) Faction Paradox's representatives start sweating blood as the bone wielding Mayakutula runs amok – leaving an increasing trail of corpses in her wake ..\$2.95

Feather 2 (of 6; Steve Uy Six-issue) Sehv finally returns from his excursion, bearing the Scale Scythe, a legendary weapon of God, as a present to Leeka.\$2.95

one-shot Frankenstein Mobster 0 (Mark Obie Wheatley) Detective Terri Todd is drawn into an illicit effort to rescue a kidnapped girl. The girl's father is a Mummy. He drives a taxi. He smells like mould and the rain doesn't help. ..\$2.95

GI Joe 23 (Josh Blaylock & Brandon Badeaux) Not only is the mystery of Julius, Hannibal, and the Clone children explained, but as suspected, all roads lead to Serpentor! ..\$2.95

GI Joe Frontline 16 (Corey Mitchel & William Wilson & Eddy Barrows) Bragging about the quality of his security

measures has got Destro into hot water with Cobra Commander, who fears treachery on all sides ..\$2.95

GI Joe vs Transformers 5 (of 6; Josh Blaylock & Mike Miller) GI Joe and Cobra find themselves caught in the middle of the Cybertronian warriors' ages old conflict, and allegiances will need to be formed quickly if they wish to survive.\$2.95

Hawaiian Dick: The Last Resort 2 (of 4; B. Clay Moore & Steven Griffin) With Mo missing, Byrd attempts to unravel the mystery of who's sabotaging the Seaside Sands and the Coral Reef resorts ..\$2.95

The Hedge Knight 3 (of 6; George R R Martin + Ben Avery & Mike S. Miller) With a runaway for a squire, his dead master's sword, and a pretty girl in his thoughts, Dunk is ready to take on the Kingdom's best knights in the Ashford tournament at Ser Duncan the Tall.\$2.95

Hellhounds 3 (George T. Singley IV & Joe Abraham) King & Shock are on a perilous mission to rescue Moss & Colby from the clutches of the nefarious Odom.\$2.95

Invincible 8 (Robert Kirkman & Cory Walker) Invincible gets to attend his first star-studded superhero funeral... featuring guest appearances from a whole bunch of Image Universe superheroes.\$2.95

Leave it to Chance Vol III: Monster Madness (James Robinson & Paul Smith: hbk) Reprints Leave it to Chance #11-13 from the original series. Chance is faced with a threat of monstrous proportions. 112pg ..\$14.95

Liberty Meadows 34 (Frank Cho) Jen and Frank's stormy relationship turns for the worse as Brandy and Roger's romance heats up. b&w ..\$2.95

Mythstalkers 7 (Douglass Barré & Jiro) Lord Marston and Mrs Chatterton lie, cheat and steal their way into the citadel of the Queen of Night.\$2.95

Noble Causes: Distant Relatives 4 (of 4; Jay Faerber & Ian Richardson + Ethen Beavers) Frost comes face to face with the person responsible for last issue's tragedy, while Liz continues her search for Race.\$2.95

Oxido 2 (of 6; Larry Hama & Pablo Ra. mondi) Wade nts the slaughterhouse with the Rim Marshals and see what happens when the man with no memory begins to get a glimmer of who he really is.\$2.95

Powers 36 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mike Avon Oeming) A story that spans the history of man and powers continues as the real secrets behind the secret superhero past is revealed.\$2.95

new Realm of the Claw 1 (of 6; Stan Winston + Francis Takanaga & David Yardin) Loudon Reed is a multi-millionaire Harrison, his adopted brother, came from humble beginnings and has dedicated his life to protecting the animals of the world from men like Loudon. Unknown by either man, 18 lifetimes have been shared between them, and a long-forgotten exile is about to come to an end.\$2.95

one-shot Realm of the Claw 0 (Stan Winston + Francis Takanaga & Gabriel Rearte + Liam Sharpe) You don't have to leave the comfort of your own local comicbook shop to get the convention special Realm of the Claw Zero issue. Contains back story information on the characters.\$5.95

Rex Mundi 7 (Avid Nelson & Eric J) Genevieve must save Julien's medical practice from being shut down by the Guild of Physicians.\$2.95

Rotogin: Junkbotz 4 (of 8; Jay Lee & J. Korim) The UBB is split and the under bosses prepare for the major expansion to take the fights worldwide.\$2.95

new Something Wicked 1 (of 4; Jerry Beck + Cameron Corniuk & Tony Viccaro + Beck) Hired to investigate a series of grave robberies, private detective Keith Ericsson stumbles upon a little more than he bargained for in the form of the late geneticist, Silas Mondrian. b&w \$2.95

Spawn 139 (Brian Holguin + Todd McFarlane & Angel Medina) Al Simmons is forced to reach a troubling conclusion: His Spawn persona has started acting on its own. \$2.50

Street Fighter 2 (Ken Siu-Chong & various) Searching for answers in the mystery of his Master's murder, Ryu begins to find them in a vision from his past, leading him to return with Ken to their old training grounds in Japan. Here Ryu is tormented by painful dreams and memories of Master Gouken's death that trigger a rage he never knew he possessed. \$2.95

Stupid Comics 2 (Jim Mahfood One-shot) Second all-new collection of the infamous Stupid Comics newspaper strip. b&w \$2.95

new Sword of Dracula 1 (Jason Henderson & Greg Scott) Ronnie Van Helsing is new to his leadership role in the Polidoriom—but it doesn't stop her from dragging the organization into a full assault on Dracula, Lord of the Vampire. In opening act issue that plays out in near-real time, the Polidoriom meet Dracula for the first time. b&w \$2.95

new Walking Dead 1 (Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore) A couple of months ago Rick Grimes was a small town cop who had never shot anyone and only ever saw one dead body. Separated from his family he must now sort through the death and confusion to try and find his wife and son. b&w \$2.95

Wildguard: Casting Call 2 (of 6; Todd Nauck) The auditions have been invaded! It's an all-out slugfest when the WildGuard hopefuls go toe-to-toe with unknown assailants. \$2.95

new Battle of the Planets: Manga 1 (of 3; David Wohl & Edwin David; *Top Cow*) The Battle of the Planets team go undercover at an amusement park where things are not as peaceful as they seem, with romance, mystery, and big mechs bent on causing destruction. b&w \$2.99

new Cursed 1 (of 4; Fiona Avery + Tippi Blevins & Romano Molenaar; *Top Cow*) When a ritualistically mutilated body is found, Journalist Shan Beaumont's father gives her a fragment of the Osiris Amulet and warns her of a coming darkness \$2.99

The Darkness 6 (of 6; Paul Jenkins & Dale Keown + Matt Miller; *Top Cow*) The final showdown between Frankie and Jackie. \$2.99

Magdalena 4 (of 4; Brian Holguin & Eric Basaldua + BATT; *Top Cow*) The Magdalena, the warrior of the Catholic Church, battles to stave off Armageddon itself. \$2.99

Tomb Raider 35 (*Black Legion* 1 of 2; James Bonny & Tony Daniel + Jon Sibal; *Top Cow*) Lara embarks on her newest quest, and comes face to face with The Black Legion. \$2.99

Witchblade 70 (David Wohl & Francis Manapul + Brian Buccellato; *Top Cow*) Sara returns from her road trip and finds all hell breaking loose back home in New York City. \$2.99

Moonstone

Werewolf: The Apocalypse – Fang and Claw Volume 2: Raging Fury (Joe Gentile & various; tpbk) Contains the third and fourth graphic novels based on the White Wolf role-playing game:

Fianna and Get of Fenris. Mature readers. 158pg b&w \$15.95

Vampire: The Masquerade Volume 3: Five Undead (various; tpbk) Reprints five full-length tales featuring some of White Wolf's signature Vampire characters: Theo Bell, Beckett, Calebro, Lucita, and Isabel. 256pg b&w \$20.95

Oni Press

one-shot Union Station (Ande Parks & Eduardo Barreto; graphic novel) See *Close-Up*, below.

one-shot Lost at Sea (Bryan O'Malley; graphic novel) How did such a shy, weird girl like Raleigh end up in a car with three hooligans on a cross-country trip? 160pg b&w \$11.95

one-shot The Atomics: Spaced Out and

Grounded in Snap City (various; tpbk) Collects the four Atomics one-shots starring It Girl, Mr Gum, Crash Metro, and Spaceman. 112pg. \$12.95

Queen & Country Volume 4: Operation Blackwall (Greg Rucka & Jason Alexander; tpbk) Tara Chace is accustomed to working in the shadows cast by world governments, but when a French conglomerate blackmails one of the Queen's most affluent subjects, Tara's espionage turns to the corporate variety. 96pg \$20.00

Queen & Country 20 (Greg Rucka & Carla Speed McNeil) It's black ops and bloodshed as agent Tara Chace makes good on a debt incurred by her superior Paul Crocker almost a lifetime ago. Mature readers. b&w \$2.99

Sirius

one-shot Aaron Bordner's Alice Sinn: A

Dark Sin (Aaron Bordner; various) After a horrible accident, Alice survived as a pure soul trapped within the prison of her mind. Though she survived freakish creatures, she now faces Dark Alice! Mature readers. 24pg b&w \$2.95

Poison Elves 75 (Drew Hayes) Disappointed by the ease of the Elvin assassin's journey to the First Step, Tenth

conjures a critter to block Luse and Lynn's path. Mature readers. 24pg b&w \$2.95

Tokyopop

Baby Birth Volume 2 (Sukehiro Tomita & Haruhiko Mikimoto; *graphic novel*) Feeling responsible for what happened to Ichigo, Hizuru is reluctant to transform again, not wanting anyone else to get hurt. 192pg b&w \$9.99

Chronicles of the Cursed Sword Vol 3 (Yuy Beop-Ryong & Park Hui-Jin; *graphic novel*) Rey, Jaryoon, Shyao, and Mingling have made it at last to the capital city of the Zhou kingdom, but not all is as they expected. 176pg b&w \$9.99

new Cyborg 009 Vols 1 & 2 (Ishinomori Shoutarou; *graphic novel*) Black Ghost, a top-secret organisation bent on promoting global warfare, kidnaps Joe along with eight other unwanted members of society from the four corners of the world and turns them into cyborgs. 200pg b&w \$9.99

.Hack//: Legend of the Twilight Vol 2 (Tatsuya Hamazaki; *graphic novel*) Shugo and crew continue their journey and encounter the mysterious Aura. 192pg b&w \$9.99

Duklyon: Clamp School Defenders Vol 2 (CLAMP; *graphic novel*) Eri senses Kentaro and Takeshi are slipping, but she is falling head over heels for Sukiyabashi. 192pg b&w \$9.99

one-shot Eric a Sakurazawa:

Nothing But Loving You (Erica Sakurazawa; *graphic novel*) Nanako, an up-and-coming model, falls in love with another model named Etsushi. However, Etsushi turns out to be gay. Nanako also discovers that a young actor is deeply in love with her and she is unable to choose between them. 192pg b&w \$9.99

FLCL Vol 2 (Gainax & Hajime Ueda; *graphic novel*) Naota's life isn't simple. He lives with his eccentric father and grandfather in a city marked by a gigantic hand-iron shaped factory perched on a hill. So the last thing he needs is for his brother's ex-girlfriend to make passes at him or for an impish, playful alien to smack him in the head with a bass guitar and then insinuate herself into his family. 192pg b&w \$9.99

new Jackie Chan Adventures

Cine-Manga Vol 1 (of 3;

various; *graphic novel*) Jackie Chan teams up with his 11-year old niece Jade, travelling the globe in the hope of locating a dozen magical talismans before the sinister Dark Hand does the same. 128pg \$7.99

Lizzie McGuire Cine-Manga Vol 3 Story (Terri Minsky; *graphic novel*) Lizzie is having major trouble controlling her parents these days. She finally scores her first babysitting gig—but her dad and mum don't trust her. What do you do when good parents go bad? 192pg b&w \$7.99

Peach Girl: Change of Heart Vol 5 (Miwa Ueda; *graphic novel*) Now that Momo and Toji are finally happy together, Sae will do whatever it takes to break them up, and her latest scheme is her nastiest ever. 192pg b&w \$9.99

Wild Act Vol 3 (of 13; Ric Takada; *graphic novel*) Yunko comes to terms with discovering that the late, great actor Akira Nanae is actually her father! 192pg b&w \$9.99

Black Library

Warhammer Monthly 73 (various) The crew of war machine imperius Dictatio unleash hell on a hostile planet in Dan Abnett's *Titan*. 40pg b&w \$3.50

Inferno! Magazine 39 (various) Cowardly Commissar Clapham Cain finds himself in the wrong place at the wrong time in *Sector 13* b&w 68pg \$6.95

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3183-3186 (weekly; various) Humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

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Fun-Size Beano 145-146 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

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Wolverine & Gambit 91 (four-weekly; various; *Marvel UK*) Compiles US Marvel's own brand of Wolverine comic strips plus magazine-style feature articles on the tortured toothy one. 76pg £2.40

Rebellion

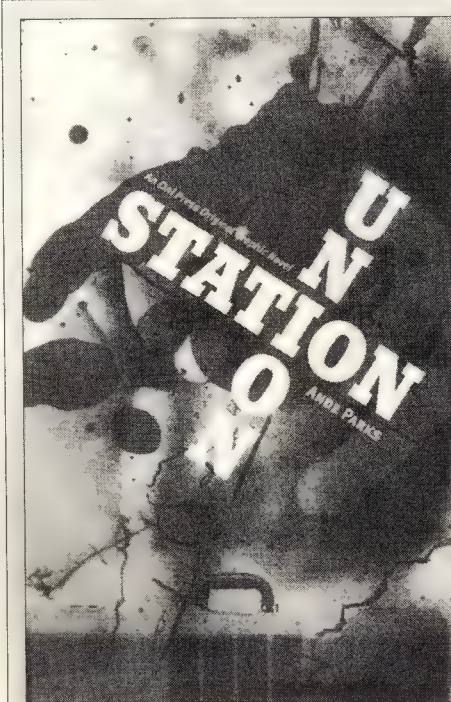
new 2000 AD Presents: Thirteen 1 (of 4; Mike Carey & Andy Clarke) Young London punk, Joe Bulmer, gets his hands on a mysterious black pearl, discovers he has telekinetic powers he never knew he had. Mature readers. \$1.95

2000 AD #1360-1364 (various) Hitman Sinister Dexter battles an enemy from *Mangapire* in *Junk Bond*, the truth of the ocean liner *Leviathan* is revealed, and *Frazer Irving* reaches its conclusion. \$3.75

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Judge Dredd Magazine 211-212 (various) Judge Dredd takes on mutant Nazis in *Sturm und Drang*, Judge Death goes West in *The Wilderness Days*, and dinosaur commandos seek their Messiah in *XTNCT*. 100pg \$10.99



close-up

Union Station

Oni Press

Writer: Ande Parks

Artist: Eduardo Barreto

Kansas City, 1933. Frank Nash is a petty criminal being escorted back into town by train. FBI agent Vetterli heads to Union Station to meet the convoy, expecting a routine job. What happens is a massacre, with no-one knowing who pulled the trigger first. A true-crime story in the tradition of *Torso* and *Road to Perdition*. Mature readers. 112pg b&w \$11.95

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Foreword

The Year is flying by, and as the seasons roll on, out comes another FPI Back Issue catalogue. Due to the huge response to our Spring & Summer catalogues, we are now including more publishers than ever before, and as a special offer, many titles now come under our Autumn **PRICE FALL!** heading, which means cheaper comics than usual, with some titles down to half our original price, but these prices will only be valid for this Autumn issue.

We've also been receiving high praise for our *FPI Essential* Comic Boxes, which made their appearance last issue and have been showing up in our stores around the country. Since producing these boxes we have now



started to work on a whole range of *FPI Essential* goods, such as comics bags of varying sizes and backing boards. So watch this space for further updates.

Gary

p.s. the picture is
by me, not of me!

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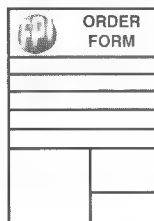
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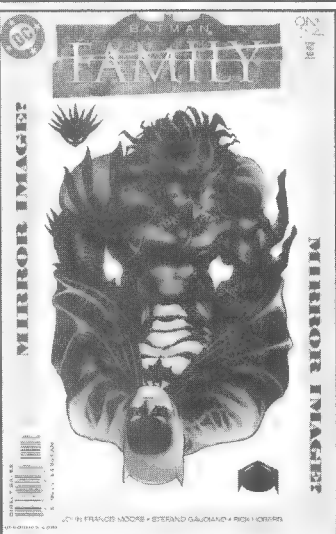
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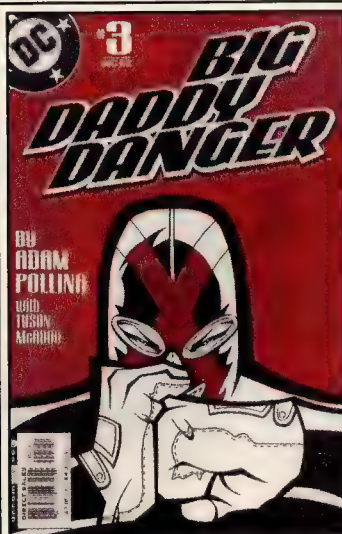
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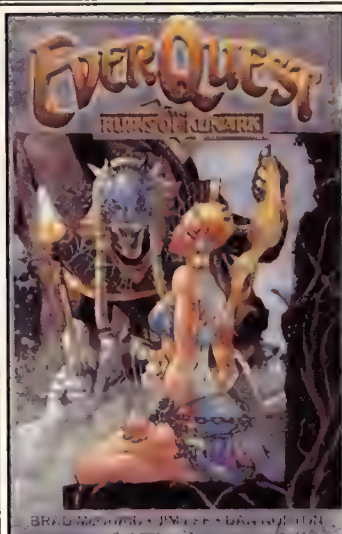
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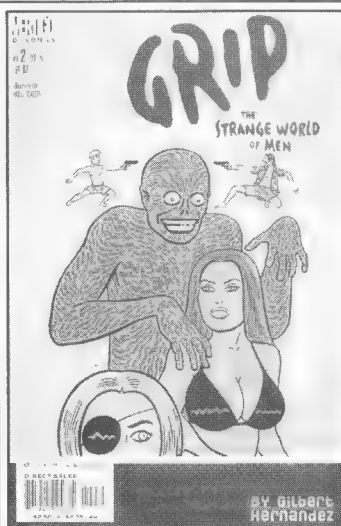
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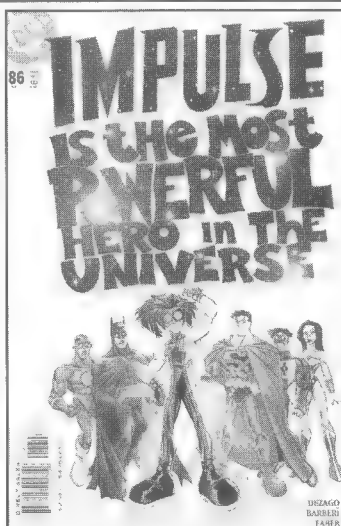
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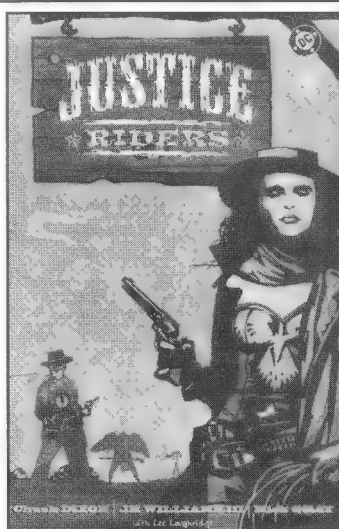
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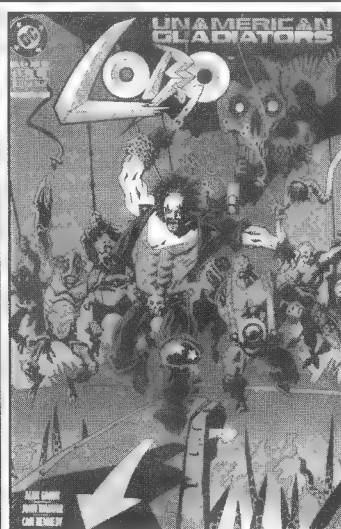
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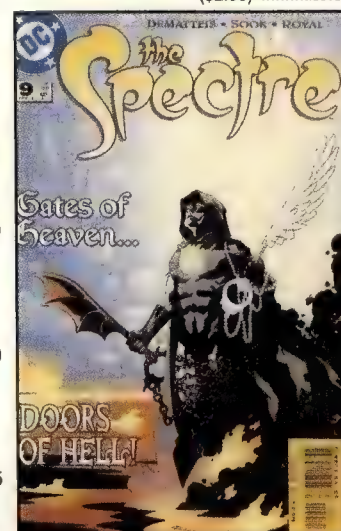
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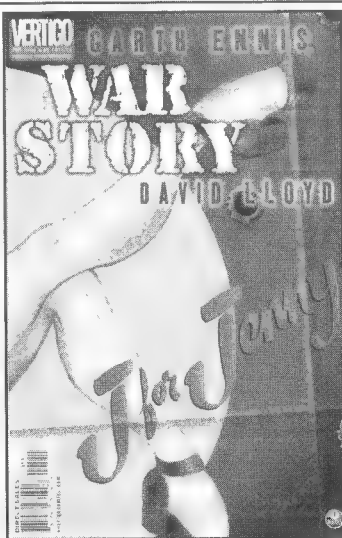
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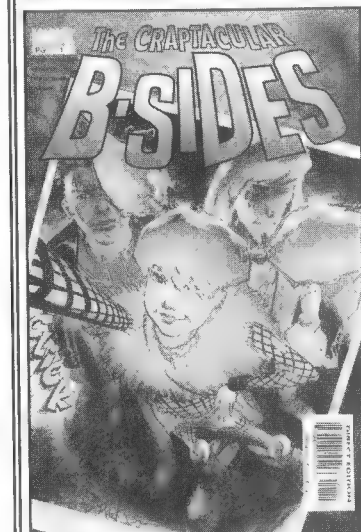
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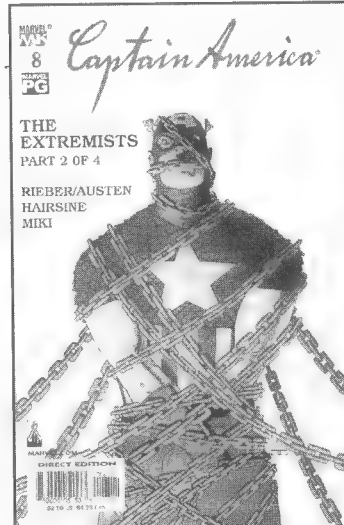
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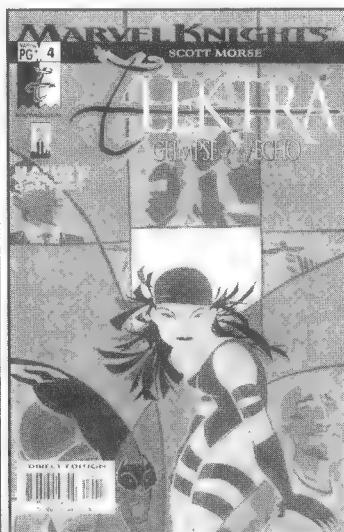
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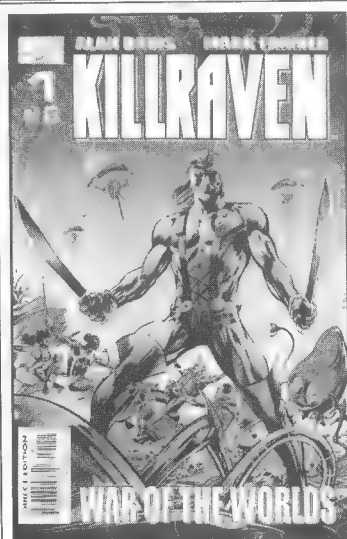
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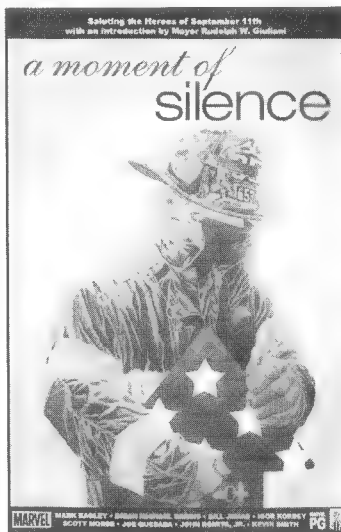
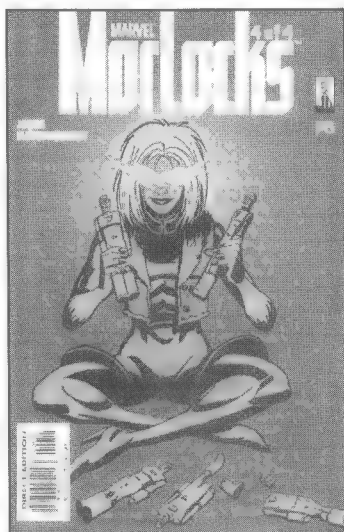
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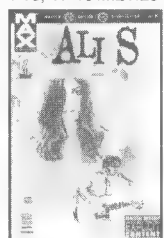
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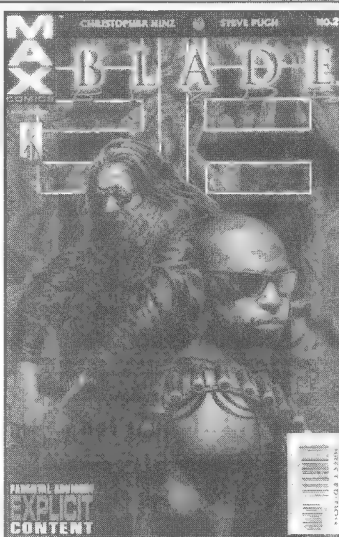
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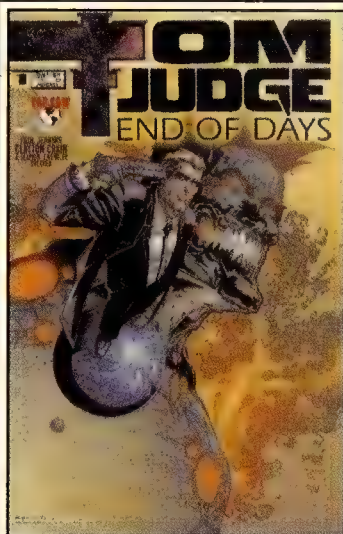
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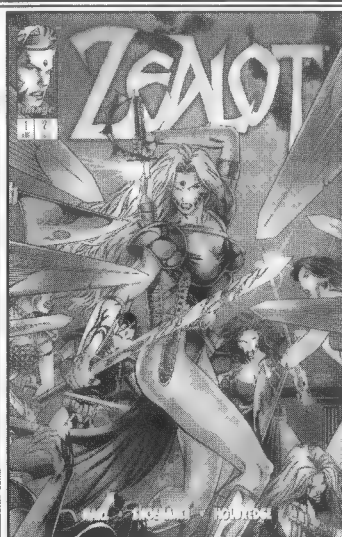
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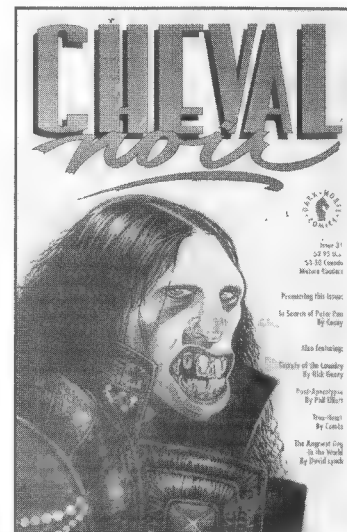
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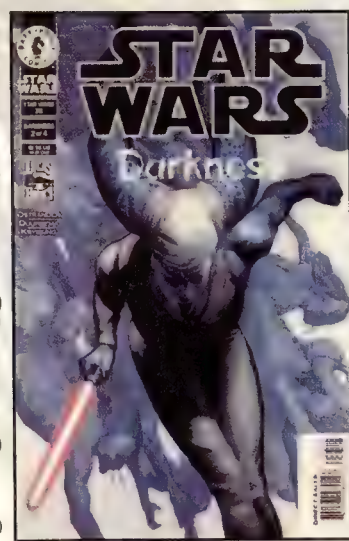
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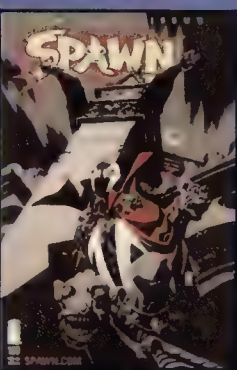
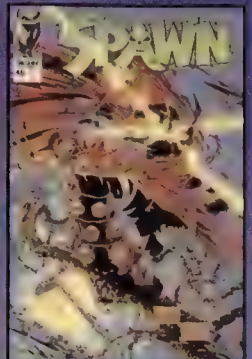
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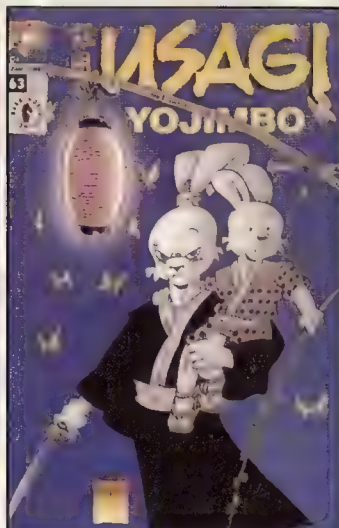
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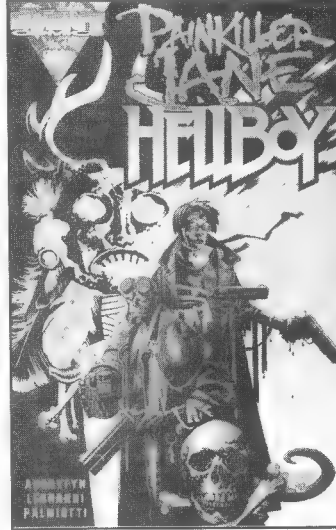
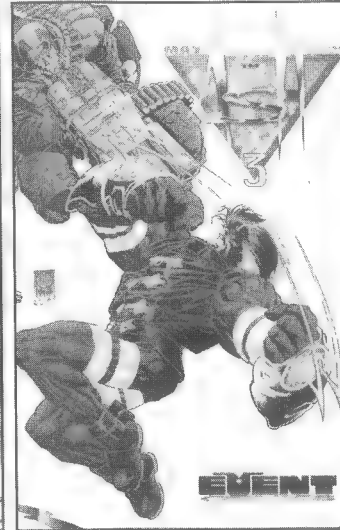
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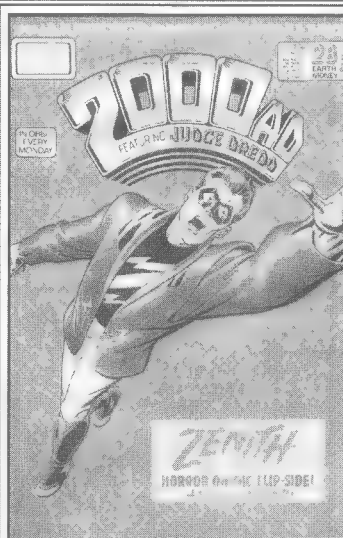
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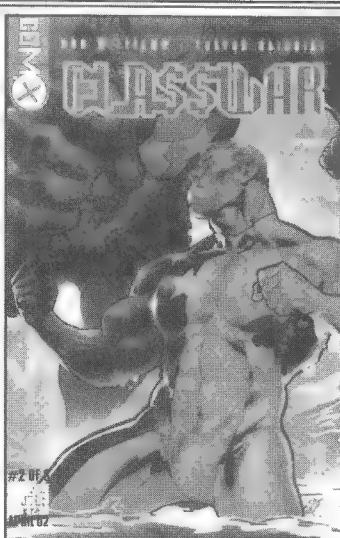
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LOVE ON THE LAM



Boys, Grab the Girls..!

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland
Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

WHEN dear old Dave Bishop left these pages in a moribund shroud of disillusionment and defeat, his last wilting salvo boiled down to: "Same old comics, same old readers."

Well, y'think? Listen, mate, there's often a yawning chasm between self-knowledge and self-guidance, but you seem to have dived in head first. Because that's a perfectly clear equation to me.

You want new readers? You need to introduce them to new comics. And by "new" I do not mean new superhero comics. There's nothing new about a superhero comic, except for the sudden surge of literacy that genre has unexpectedly witnessed. Anyone who knows our shop, who's read our monthly e-shots, is perfectly aware that Tom and I at least enjoy the odd superhero comic as much as the next joker with a bit of testosterone, but neither of us is new to comics, and neither of are – contrary to the implications of the odd tart comment – are girls. So let's just say that you want *girls* reading comics.

This is where we come in, because unlike most comic shops come Saturday morning, ours is bursting with 16 to 19-year old girls. Buying Comics. And they'd spend more if their boyfriends would let them. I'm sick of those whiners dragging their engrossed girlfriends out of this shop when they've patently still got 20 quid in their wallets. Don't they understand how cool this medium is? So what are the girls reading?

I can break that down into two camps, largely. Leaving aside the fully fledged women – we're talking teenagers here – they're reading saucy manga where everyone's just one slap-stick away from seeing each other naked and Cute Dead Things.

Yes, sugar and spice, and all things vice, that's what girls are now made of. And that's what they want to buy: **Johnny the Homicidal Maniac, Squee, Lenore, Gloom Cookie, Everything Can Be Beaten, Courtney Crumrin** and absolutely anything by Edward Gorey or Junko Mizuno. The more bunnies maimed during the course of a miniseries, the better.

Three revolutions in this industry have recently made all this possible:

- 1) The rise of the trade paperback. Some of you may remember dreaming of the day when you could watch your favourite films and TV series whenever you wanted; but videos didn't exist, and that very idea was like pie in the sci-fi sky. Same went for comics: they came, they went, they cost a fortune to find, and there'll always be those gaps. Not so now. You can buy the whole lot in one volume.
- 2) Companies such as Amaze Ink have made sure their little **Fillerbunny** or **I Feel Sick** pamphlets are also kept in print.
- 3) Distributors have finally made sure that retailers have access to consistent supplies of these. And let me tell you, as obvious as that may sound, it didn't happen overnight. So instead of a single month's worth of sales on each of these titles, by keeping this

“...sugar and spice, and all things vice, that's what girls are now made of.”

material on our shelves week in, week out, we've now sold 500 copies of **I Feel Sick** to 500 different people. That's 500 new people, most of them girls.

Replicate that across dozens of other titles before moving them on to old reliables like **Preacher** and **Sandman**, and that's a considerable stream of revenue which is showing no signs of drying up. If anything it's swelling in the case of the younger girls, who seem fixated on manga to the point of being unable to afford the latest Avril Lavigne. Forty to fifty quid over the counter every other month. Where does all that money come from?

I know where the *customers* come from. I've asked them. They come via anime and, through research over the web, have discovered manga. Which they then went looking for. See, we don't even need to advertise, we just need to stock the stuff. Manga is the one category where book sales have increased almost every quarter year regardless of

seasonal fluctuations, but since Tokyopop arrived on the scene with digest editions of **Love Hina**, **Chobits**, **Clamp High School Detectives**, **Fake**, **Mars**, **GTO** etc (and indeed etc) it's gone into orbit.

Why? They're cheap. £6.99 a shot for a full trade paperback? No wonder Viz (CrossGen and now Amaze Ink, Dark Horse and DC) have followed suit. The readers aren't interested in seeing the art in all its glory, they want a great big slice for the price of a pittance – as, incidentally, predicted in **The Comics Journal** by no less a luminary than Kurt Busiek. He just didn't pick the right genre.

The right genre is "Get Your Kit Off." Whether it's boy/girl, girl/girl or boy/boy, everyone out there wants someone to get their kit off, and Tokyopop has finally proved to be the publisher brave enough to go where no publisher has gone before.

Is it literature? Fuck that, we've plenty more involving stuff to satisfy adult sensibilities later on. In the meantime, get your kit off!

As Marc Almond once said: "You've got to eat the hamburger to appreciate the steak." But then he also said: "My head explodes and my teeth are chewed out on the floor." Which would certainly sell well here.

Anyway, all I'm asking is that we serve the basic common denominator for girls as much as we do for boys. You know, with all those Image titles? Act on impulse – give them a flash. And do it now, because they are *looking* right now, and if we don't grab 'em first, they'll settle in nicely for a lifetime's loyalty to the nearest bookstore.

P.S. Any retailer who wants free info on other profitable titles, just give us a call, or talk to Richard at Red Route Distribution. He knows what he's talking about, and he'll have a better overview of what other stores are selling. This has been a public service announcement on behalf of anyone interested in the proliferation of our medium.

Thank you.

Stephen Holland runs Nottingham's Page 45 with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin.



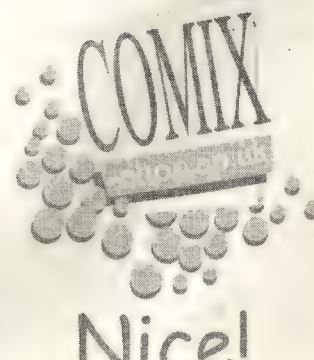
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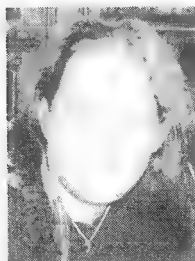
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Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER



The mild-mannered creator/writer of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. But, despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its new home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

Future Frog

Ethan Van Sciver is better known to modern comicbook fans as a Marvel artist, especially on the **X-Men**. But some of us old-timers who still remember the early Nineties know a very different work of his.

Published by Harris, at a time when certain young hotshots inside and out of Image were getting major exposure, Ethan brought us... **Cyberfrog**. And now he's bringing it back. **Cyberfrog vs Adolf Hitler: Ach-Tongue**. Oh, boy.

First of the Fallen

Been quite a week for CrossGen, hasn't it? The solicitation of the last issue of **First** from CrossGen, issue 37, has caused some fans to question the initial description of the title, one of a number from CrossGen, originally described as 10 year epics. I'm told the upcoming "war" may cull a number of similarly described and lower-selling titles as well.

Bookstore returns seem to have been a major problem for CrossGen, with some venues reportedly pulling the whole line off the shelves. This isn't exactly uncommon for comics and it's quite likely that the same places will, a few months later, request them all back again. But it can cause cashflow issues.

Mark Alessi's recent follow-up interview at **Comic Book Resources** did bring out one very interesting wrinkle, that Alessi has spent pretty much all his available money on CrossGen. Many industry commentators had assumed he'd put forward a stack of cash, and used it to secure loans on which to base the rest of the company - but it seems he used a lot more of his own money than many had previously believed.

But CrossGen's financial position can't be too easily diagnosed. The company just bought two rather large buildings right next to their original offices in Clearwater. Doesn't sound like a decision from a company about to go belly-up, especially considering the Florida property market right now.

And then there's Mark Alessi himself. It's been reported that, despite his online image, Bill Jemas has got nothing compared to Alessi when it comes to pursuing issues, pushing agendas and basically causing a ruck. And Mark's recent reported comments on **CBR** certainly back that up. Basically, never underestimate a rottweiler dressed as a poodle.

The Dark Night Returned

I hear the US/Canadian power outage hit a lot of people hard. So hard in fact that some DC staff were forced to go out drinking until the bar ran out of ice. I hear they then had to seek shelter at Shelly and Philip Bond's place for the night. I hope the Bonds have cleaners.

Comic Creator Goes Offline Shock

Could this be part of the Great Write Flight? Mark Millar writes in an e-mail that after his laptop had to be repaired he found himself totally offline for the

continued on next page...

Networks



Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Missing Milx

WITH his beautiful pencils on the new **Silver Surfer** book, new Malaysian artist Milx seemed a superstar in the making. However, after completing that book, and some pencils for IDW's new title, **Wake The Dead**, Milx (whose real name is Mahathir Buang) vanished without a trace, not responding to any communication from IDW or Marvel. **Wake The Dead** now has a new artist, and Marvel has been forced to delay the second issue of **Silver Surfer** until October, when Lan Medina will take over art chores.

But what of Milx? Someone using the handle Mo_o, had started posting on the Marvel 2000 message board around the time that **Silver Surfer** was announced, and intimated, without ever specifying saying, that he was Milx. After Milx vanished, Mo_o posted that he had "returned" and would be carrying on with the Fan-Fiction he had been writing before.

However, Newsarama managed to track down the artist in his native Malaysia, and interviewed him about the whole mystery. Why did he quit?: "Breakdown," the Malaysian artist said.

"After finishing issue #1 of **Silver Surfer** in early June, I had a breakdown. I've had a history of breakdowns before this and [usually] I remain quiet, alone and stay away from my friends. I run away whenever there's a breakdown."

"I had actually informed Steve [Niles] and Jeff [Marriott, both of IDW] at the end of July. Marvel sent me some emails to say that they still want the pages. But I didn't reply."

By the end of July, it was pretty clear that he had missed all his deadlines.

"I feel guilty. I pushed

myself to work, but I just couldn't draw. It's like things went blank."

For the record, the artist revealed that he managed to draw, "16 pages of **Wake The Dead** #1. Jeff replied to my email to say that, 'It's okay. I know that you're off the book and we've found a replacement. I still need to cover to issue #3, though. Don't waste your talents. You're extremely talented.'"

That said, Milx confirmed that he has drawn, coloured and submitted the first three



Above: Cover to **Wake the Dead** #1 by Milx.

Wake The Dead covers.

"I plan to stay on schedule on the covers. Keep track with the editor and writer. I have also emailed Marvel."

He has also confirmed that he will not be attempting any more monthly schedules, instead concentrating on one-shots, covers and specials.

"I want to be responsible and get back on track. If I say sorry now, it doesn't mean that I'm going to get my gigs back. Nevertheless, I am still sorry for everything, especially to Steve Niles. To my friends, I will get back to comics but not in the near future. To be back, I need to be in a good shape and not miss any deadlines."

And he had the following to say about Mo_o:

"To Mo_o, I know he is

somewhere around this region, somebody I know, even. Nice stunt, man, but you worsened the whole situation. Go to a forum and show your artwork. I am not Mo_o. I don't write fan fiction."

The whole situation seems to be a little sad, both for Milx in not being able to fulfill a career that must have been a dream come true, and for Mo_o just being a bit sad.

Wishes Granted

THE RECENT announcement of Grant Morrison's impending two year exclusive contract with DC had the 'Net exploding with rumours as to whether he would be writing **Superman**, possibly in conjunction with Frank Quitely.

This expanded into massive speculation about the **Superman** titles, with Mark Millar and Bryan Hitch rumoured to be taking over **Superman**. Millar appeared to confirm this, although it has since proved to be false, with some people alleging that Marvel spread the rumour to raise reader's expectations, hoping that they'd be

disappointed if the teams weren't as great. DC has since announced Jim Lee and Brian Azzarello, fresh from stints on **Batman**, are to work on **Superman**, with Chuck Austen taking over **Action**.

As for Morrison, **Comic Book Resource's** Hector Lima caught up with him recently:

Lima: It may be early to ask this, but it must be asked: You and Frank Quitely on **Superman** - yes or no?

Morrison: I don't know yet. I'd like to do a **Superman** project of some kind with Frank but we won't be on the regular book. Quitely will be doing **We3** until Christmas and then we'll see what happens.

Lima: Apart from

Superman, what are the company-owned titles you still want to lay your hands on?

Morrison: I have plans to take a bunch of no-hope, second-string back-catalogue characters and boost them up into the top rank in a series which will completely re-envision the notion of the "superhero." News as it happens.

Lima: And what are the status of **We3** and **LeSEXY** right now?

Morrison: **We3** is underway with incredible, groundbreaking Frank Quitely artwork. No-one will be able to do comics the same way again after **We3**. Check crackcomicks.com soon for previews as they arrive. It's something new and different. **LeSEXY** – I wrote two episodes, loved them and then had the project rejected by Karen Berger – she felt it was a little too dark and covered areas I'd

already dealt with in **The Filth** – which was true to some extent, except **LeSEXY** was much funnier and even crueller... so I figured she has a right to draw the line. Every other idea I've had is fine with Karen so I may rework **LeSEXY** as a TV show, which was how it



Above: **LeSEXY** Grant Morrison and Bill Jemas.

started originally.

Lima: Are **Seaguy** and **Indestructible Man** or any of the "brought to life comic" projects of yours coming out?

Morrison: The first 96-page **Seaguy** book, **Seaguy and the Wasps of Atlantis**, is already written and it's "just" a strange, poignant story of love and

loss written by me and drawn by one of the comic industry's finest young artists. **Indestructible Man** is a big "serious" piece of work which is looking very daunting at the moment and will probably not get written until 2004.

Both of those pieces were conceived before I came up with the "living comics" notion, as was **Vimanarama!** – an Islamic sci-fi romance for Vertigo. Philip Bond is currently hard at work drawing the pretty pictures.

Networks has excepted only the news from this very entertaining interview, but Morrison also discusses his aborted work on **Marvel Boy 2** and **Ultimate Fantastic Four**, his movie script, as well as his final issues of **New X-Men**, with Marc Silvestri.

Hector has offered **CI** the whole interview, so if you want to see it, let us know.

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

longest he's been in quite some time. And found, "Like the rest of you, I'm an email junkie and agonised over not being able to reach my messages and/or gaze upon some online praise for whatever crap I had out there on the stands during that particular week."

"However, one thing that really struck me at the end of those eight days was that I'd gotten about 30% more work done and finished early every night (as opposed to my usual 12 hour stints I've been doing over the last three years)." So, he's going offline much more, save for Monday afternoons (so he can read **LITG** when it goes up, apparently) and catch up on most of his e-mail. And then he's back to the phones.

"So here goes; life without email. It's back to human voices for a while and embarrassed Americans trying to decipher my thick Scottish brogue."

I'll give him a week.

Lo Brow

Names to start dropping around the **Lobo** film currently being planned? Joel Silver on production and they're courting Bryan Singer for director. The latter would seem like a typecasting move but stranger things have happened. You know, like Singer doing **X-Men** in the first place.

The Landfill has Spoken

Julie Burchill is one of my favourite modern writers – as is Dave Sim. I very rarely agree with a single thing they say, but I love how they say it. Julie has described herself as a Stalinist Thatcherite, has embraced hypocrisy willingly as an artform and was found in a state of mild panic when the 'I' button failed to work on her machine. Basically, she's great.

And in this week's **Guardian** column (the one thing the paper publishes that is guaranteed to fill the letter columns) she decides to plug comics. Ish. A bit.

"Adults who read comics was a big one with me. I didn't just believe that anyone over the age of 15 who read comics should have their voting rights removed (even if they didn't have them yet), I also believed that they shouldn't be allowed access to further education or to adopt small children."

It goes on with Julie having had a Damascan experience and proceeds to plug the works of Scottish/French duo Metaphrog, whether they wanted it or not. Read more at the **Guardian** website (www.guardian.co.uk) It's also possible that in one article, she's done more for comics amongst the British chattering classes than, well, pretty much anything since **Viz**.

Apology For... Something

So, anyway, I've been talking to Paul Jenkins. Paul Jenkins is of the belief that somewhere, on a message board, I made a derogatory comment concerning his colleague Howard Mackie and Mackie's parents. And he made his point most vociferously at the Chicago Con. Jenkins doesn't recall where this statement is meant to have been made and I've been unable to locate or remember such a statement.

Apparently the "Howard Mackie's parenthesis" explanation doesn't wash with Jenkins either. Nevertheless, I'd like to openly apologise to Howard Mackie for any statement or similar I may have made. It's not been a habit of mine to address the personal lives of comicbook creators, unless they themselves have instigated it, and I'd like to apologise for any offence caused.

If anyone out there can shed light on what this statement I'm meant to have made was, where it appeared and when, I'd be very grateful. Still I'm glad it gave something for Mike Doran to dine out on at Chicago.



Chris Bunting's

COMICS WEBWORLD

Image's monthly **Masters of the Universe** comic has been a thoroughly enjoyable read. With CrossGen about to release **He-Man and the Rise of the Snake Men** before taking over the ongoing series, here are some sites with all the info you could possibly need or simply to induce nostalgia:

HE-MAN.ORG

www.he-man.org

The great layout lets you easily check out whatever it is that interests you, from all the **MOTU**-related cartoons to the comics, toys, books and the live-action movie. Brimming over with offerings and facts, this site oozes energy and excitement and, due to its hard-working staff, is constantly improving. The He-Man Holy Grail.

MVCREATIONS

www.mvcreations.com

No sooner had my first review of this site seen print (**CI** #159) than – exactly as predicted – a revamp transpired. Home to the minds behind **Masters of the Universe**, **Space Ace**, **Dragon's Lair** and **Tales of the Realm**, this now has far more going on, including behind-the-scenes, links and mouth-watering glimpses of upcoming titles.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SWORD

www.geocities.com/Area51/Meteor/2607/theothersideofthesword

Remember when, in the 1985 animated movie, *The Secret of The Sword*, Madame Razz turns two Horde Troopers into sheep? Or when Orko's absence in the movie is explained? No, of course you don't. These and many other scenes were completely edited out. This innovative site, using rare pics along with descriptions, dedicates itself to revealing what didn't make it into the cinema. Maybe it should push for a Director's Edition DVD?

HE-MAN & THE COMICBOOK

www.geocities.com/hotyoungbook/motu1

Did you know that He-Man fought Superman? How about the fact that creators such as Adam Kubert, Mike Zeck and Curt Swan worked on **MOTU** comics? Or even that J. Michael Straczynski and Paul Dini wrote for the original cartoon show? Well, if you didn't, info on all this – and lots more besides – can be found in this article written by yours truly which documents He-Man's long and rich association with comicbooks. How does it score?

You decide!

SNAKE MOUNTAIN: MATT'S ACTION FIGURE ARCHIVE

www.snake-mountain.co.uk

No listing would be complete without mentioning a site that features the very thing which began the **MOTU** phenomenon all those years ago: the action figures. Using photographs, this archives many of the classic toys, from King Randor and Ninjor to Orbear and Clamp Champ. Some information with the pics would be useful, but that quibble aside, other sections, particularly the buy/sell one, help make this site a must-visit.

HE-MAN FANS COLLECTING GUIDE

www.he-manfans.com

It really is all here and then some! Episode guides, exclusive interviews, toy price guides, collecting tips, old TV commercials, even photos of toyshop displays from the Eighties! A valiant effort and one of the coolest **MOTU** sites out there.

Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **Comics International's** comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.

Review codes: Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a 1 to 10 basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <--> to <+>+. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <-->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.

Review panel: Chris D. Bowen (CDB), Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Rob Cave (RC), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Stephen Hall (SH), David Knight (DK), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Scott Montgomery (SM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Tim Pilcher (TP), Andy Smith (AS), Terence Stewart (TS), Mat Thomas (MT), Alex Thompson (MAT)

CrossGen

The Crossovers 5

by Rodi & Mauricet + Colon

Eradika struggles to contend with vampiric infection and the alien that has found its way into her dimension... so it's Cubby the dog to the rescue! Crosstown, meanwhile, becomes a multiple target... how much longer can the Crossover clan keep their respective double lives secret? Genre juggling by a superb creative team. If you're not reading this, you're seriously missing out! (CEB) 8

Crux 26

by Dixon & Ryan + Marcos

The Atlanteans consider Earth their home. The Terra Cognito corporation considers Earth its sole property and wants it back. A military team is sent in, and that's when the trouble begins. Backed by the capable guest-pencils of Paul Ryan, Chuck Dixon builds the suspense by giving the invaders' point-of-view priority. A classy comic. (CEB) 7

Masters of the Universe: Icons of Evil – Mer-Man

by Kirkman & Su;
CrossGen/MVCreations

Mer-Man rules Eternia's oceans, or so he thinks, until he hears of an untouched civilisation. His invasion has unanticipated and worrying consequences. Mer-Man seems a cunning leader, but there are glimpses of what makes him the incompetent we all know. A fantastic addition to the MOTU mythos; Robert Kirkman writes a heated story and EJ Su, with his feast-for-the-eyes art, will make big waves. Top-notch. (CEB) 7

Mystic 37

by Bedard & Lopresti + Ryan

Archemus captures Giselle and renders her powerless. Help is at hand in her sister and the other Guild Masters until they suffer the same fate. Aaron Lopresti's rich art combines with Tony Bedard's sharp writing in this splendid, highly accessible romp. (CEB) 7

Negation 18

by Bedard & Pelletier + Meikis

Westin is taken prisoner and, to stave off an unhealthy dose of torture, relays his story to

his captors. Is the scam artist finally telling the truth... or has he a contingency plan? Another super-slick sci-fi issue by the ever-improving Tony Bedard and Paul Pelletier. (CEB) 7

The Path 15

by Marz & Smith + Pennington

Todosi has been raised from the dead to seize his brother's coveted Weapon of Heaven... but to what lengths will he go to get it? Writer Ron Marz has always been a great, although under-appreciated, writer. Here he sets the record straight, and along with Matthew Smith, Mark Pennington and Michael Atiyeh produces a stunning read. (CEB) 7

Route 666 #12

by Bedard & Moline + Geraci

With Cassie's second-sight gone, she fails to see the demons disguised as her parents for what they truly are. This allows Tony Bedard to play a lot of this issue for laughs, while the serious elements of the plot lets penciller Karl Moline and inker Drew Geraci do what they do best. High-energy horror. (CEB) 7

Route 666 #13

by Bedard & Moline + Geraci + Bell

<=> A curious hybrid of a horror comic.

Snake Plissken Chronicles 1

by O'Neill & Rodriguez;
CrossGen/Hurricane Entertainment

John Carpenter's movie anti-hero — made famous by Kurt Russell — makes the transition to the comicbook. Here, he heads a heist of a dead president's car, for a client willing to pay \$30 million. But with that amount of money in the frame, even friends need watching. Thanks to writer William O'Neill and penciller Tone Rodriguez, fans of the *Escape From...* movies won't be disappointed. Good old-fashioned fun. (CEB) 7

Snake Plissken is such an obvious choice for a licensed title I'm surprised Dark Horse didn't get round to publishing it. As first issues go this is very non-committal stuff. Snake turns up in town, having killed a few punks along the way, plans a job with an old friend and gets captured. End of issue. The dry humour and bleak style of *Escape from New York* is nowhere to be seen in this first instalment. Not exactly an impressive start. (RN) 5

Drawing inspiration from the suburban domestic small-town horror of Stephen King and the TV series *American Gothic*, mixed in with comedy and traditional comicbook action it tries to take a lot within its broad scope. More often than not it succeeds. Worth a look if you like your horror with its tongue occasionally in its cheek. (RN) 7

Ruse 21

by Beatty & Guice + Perkins

<--> High praise for Ruse, mixing Victorian high jinks as it does with a subtle blend of bitchy humour between the main protagonists. This however is not one of the best tales in the series. Simon Archard's framing for murder and subsequent release after being found innocent feels rushed and lacks the usual deft touches that make this title stand out, but a recommendation to try it for yourself still stands. (RN) 6

The Silken Ghost 2

by Dixon & Rosado + Gibson + Atiyeh

<=> A spin-off from the successful Way of the Rat. Chuck Dixon writes both, so there is a consistent style and substance throughout. Essentially, this fills in some of the backstory of the eponymous character and serves as an outlet for Dixon to work off more Water Margin set pieces. If you like WOTR you'll like this, although not quite as much, as there's no Po Po the monkey. (RN) 6

Sojourn 24

by Marz & Land + Leisten

<=> The desert-bound adventure reaches its climax in the underground insect people hive city. Looking back over the genesis and execution of this series it's comforting to note how the comic has grown from its generic *Lord of the Rings* roots into something far more exotic and imaginative. Greg Land's superb artwork takes a lot of the credit for this, but the storytelling too has grown more mature and confident with each passing issue. A truly wonderful fantasy series. (RN) 8

Sojourn

– The Warrior's Tale

by Marz & Land + Leisten; tpbk

<+> This is the point where Sojourn shook off its trad-fantasy origins and explored richer

territory. Leaving behind the wannabe Middle Earth setting, the characters head to an Egyptian-inspired land full of winged people. The writing gets better, the art and colouring becomes sensational and the series takes on a darker tone without losing its old-school charm. This trade paperback collection of issues 13 to 18 would make an excellent jumping on point for anyone who fancies sampling this impressive series. (RN) 8

Solus 4

by Kesel & Perez + Magyar

<=> I really wanted to like this new George Perez series, but the story is frankly nothing more than your usual meat and potatoes superheroics — like 'cosmic' Jim Starlin on a bad day. The characters are mostly generic non-entities and the quest-driven plot (find all the sigil bearers, pass GO and claim your prize) delivers nothing more than a series of run of the mill encounters designed to test the patience of its readers. (RN) 4

Way of the Rat 14

by Dixon & Ross + Geraci + Garcia

<=> It's 'oh so quiet' this month as Chuck Dixon dispenses with dialogue as a team of Ninjas storms a boobytrapped castle. Way of the Rat is one of the best comics Dixon has ever written and it captures the feel of its source material perfectly. Anyone familiar with Asian cinema will appreciate this good-humoured romp through mythical China. Consistently fun in a high-energy, wire-fu kind of way. (RN) 7

Dark Horse

B.P.R.D.: Dark Waters

by Augustyn & Davis

Guy Davis has a proven track record adapting his messy art style to gothic horror on his own and others' properties, so it's no wonder his work successfully captures the world of Mike Mignola's Hellboy characters for this one-shot. Brian Augustyn has also worked in the horror genre, and his gentle scripting of unsettled small-town spirits evokes Mignola's more off-hand humour. (MAT) 7

Joss Whedon's Fray 8

by Whedon & Moline + Owens

<=> Fray defeats the Demon Womb, and nothing much is resolved. Perhaps as a result of this title's long delays, this climax is a bit of a damp squib. The writing seems rushed, as if Joss Whedon just wanted to be rid of it, and the art has developed in the long wait between issues, but for the worse. (KG) 6

Sock Monkey 2

by Millionaire

<=> When Ann Louise interferes with his love life, discarding the sock elephant, Sock Monkey goes on a murderous rampage, destroying everything Sock Monkey-oriented. Sounds like commercial suicide to me. Brilliant nevertheless. (CDB) 8

Syn 1

by Giffen
& Titus + Washburn; Rocket

In the far future, a robot hunts down other robots that pretend to be human. The Free Comic Day preview made this look like an exciting new title, but the reality is it's a little disappointing. The setting is good, and the



art is decent, but the storytelling and scripting are a little incomprehensible. (KG) 7

DC Comics

Arrowsmith 1

by Busiek & Pacheco + Merino

Kurt Busiek and Carlos Pacheco team up once again for their own sprawling action epic, as a young boy rushes to join a WWI fought by ogres, dragons and rock-trolls. Pacheco's draftsmanship is in no doubt here, although his rather rounded clean forms and detailed art seem a little out of place for the period and fantasy genre. And Busiek's move from Marvel's continuity minutiae highlights his abilities at originating his own cast of formulaic characters. (MAT) 6

The Authority 4

by Morrison
& Turner + Regla; WildStorm

<=> Punch-punch, slap-slap. In this, the last issue of the relaunch that I'll be buying, several superheroes who were once cool and iconic trade punches with bland adversaries in a simply drawn and poorly written tale that aspires to an epic grandeur that was taken as read in the title's first (and far superior) incarnation. In many ways it's like rock bands reforming years after they split who vainly attempt to recapture the giddy heights of quality they once occupied with ease. An embarrassingly poor title whose existence you only encourage by buying it. (RN) 4

Batman 617

by Loeb & Lee + Williams

<-> A disappointing issue, full of kerfuffle, and crowded with guest appearances. Batman's adversary leads him around effortlessly before unmasking himself, revealing the face of a character who ought to be long dead; but it's most likely just the effects of the fear gas. (DK) 5

<+> What more can be said about Jim Lee's lithe and expressive art? His frames are gorgeously constructed. Jeph Loeb's plot becomes more and more unfeasible, Batman's assumptions more unlikely, leaving the 'shocking' revelation scene, confirming his taunter's identity, long-overdue. Regular readers will have guessed right well before the end of this clue-heavy script, but the tension is well drafted and Lee's art is perfect for this dark conspiracy tale. (IM) 7

<=> The *Hush* story has been selling by the bucketload, a testament to the fine job Loeb and Lee have done so far. The rogues gallery parade continues with the fleetingly brief inclusion of the Scarecrow and a surprise adversary at the end that should raise more than just a few eyebrows. If the final page suggests anything at all it must be that Loeb and Lee have been given carte blanche to include anything they want in their run on this title. Suffice to say next issue's explanation should prove mightily interesting. (RN) 7

Batman: Gotham Knights 43

by Beatty & Robinson + Floyd

<=> A lukewarm adventure in flashback, featuring Batgirl and the Jason Todd Robin, that serves mainly to foreshadow the current investigation of Bruce Wayne's apparent endangerment of minors; but also throws in a one-page prologue to *The Killing Joke* that fans can take or leave. (DK) 6



it's hard to imagine anyone who isn't a rabid Sandman fan already shelling out for this. This comic isn't up to Thompson's usual standard, and certainly isn't worth the arm and leg being charged for it. Presumably this is the most authentic manga bit of the whole undertaking, as Titan always overcharges furiously for its manga reprints. (DM) 5

Death: At Death's Door

by Thompson; Vertigo; \$12.95

This doesn't add much to *Season of Mists* besides Jill Thompson's aggressively cute artwork, which is so sugary it's apt to make diabetics feel ill. There isn't any substance to this at all, apart from the scenes from the original Sandman story Thompson reworks. There are a couple of very good jokes, but these aren't really enough to sustain 190 pages of story. There are also a few anachronisms (Kurt Cobain wasn't actually dead when *Season of Mists* is set) and a remarkably pompous afterword stressing just how important and impressive the Sandman is, while plugging the collections of the series and every spin-off that DC has milked from it to date. Which is an odd play as

Batman: Hong Kong

by Moench & Wong; \$24.95

Taking Batman out of his usual milieu has produced mixed results over the years, but this tale begins promisingly with a computer hacker witnessing a murder in Gotham live on the Internet. Unfortunately, when the Dark Knight follows the case to Hong Kong, the story descends into an uninspired gangster saga featuring a lame, cliché-spouting Batman wannabe called Night Dragon. The usually excellent Doug Moench had a brilliant run on Batman in the '90s, but this effort does not deserve the hardcover graphic novel treatment it has received. Still, Tony Wong's art is quite nice. (SH) 4

Batman: Nevermore 5

by Wein & Davis

<=> Busy boy Guy Davis is on art duties for the final issue of Len Wein's Batman and Edgar Allan Poe crossover. The escalation of violence in Victorian Baltimore leaves the finger pointing at the penultimate members of the Gotham Club and surprise, surprise, it ain't Bruce Wayne! Davis's skills at capturing the feel of period America are once more on show, but Wein's rather laboured mixing of Poe's poetry with events in the comic jar an otherwise fun *Elseworlds* tale. (MAT) 7

Beware the Creeper 4

by Hall & Chiang; Vertigo

<=> More madness on the streets of 1920s Paris as the increasingly maniacal Creeper intensifies her programme of surrealistic terrorism on the matriarchal Arbogast family, with tragic consequences. Jason Hall expertly paces the drama and action surrounding the colourful city, but it is Cliff Chiang's loose brushstrokes that evoke the atmosphere that makes this series so distinct. (MAT) 7

Blood and Water 5

by Winick & Coker; Vertigo

<=> This has been about as original a vampire series as it is possible to write these days. The vamps here are actually rather likeable and a far cry from the self-pitying Goths normally associated with the genre. The ending in this final issue is satisfactory, if a little rushed, and leaves the stage open for a sequel should sales permit. If you didn't

follow it, be sure to pick up the inevitable trade paperback collection. (RN) 7

Catwoman 21

by Brubaker + Stewart

<+> Holly and Selina are on the road, and Captain Cold has a cool heist in mind. Can Catwoman help him lift a flashy artefact? And if she does, will he get to keep it? Ed Brubaker and Cameron Stewart have a great synergy, easily crafting one of DC's more satisfying monthlies around a well-developed and engaging cast. (TS) 7

The Filth 12

by Morrison
& Weston + Erskine; Vertigo

<-> Spartacus Hughes goes mad, and something goes wrong with the Hand's fictional world. It's difficult to tell what's going on, and while it was fun at the beginning, it's now getting frustrating. Still, the comic looks lovely, and there are lots of great ideas in here. I just wish I understood the plot! (KG) 7

<+> Greg's madness reaches a crescendo as he faces rogue para-personality and arch-enemy Spartacus Hughes to the death, while the Hand's exploration into two-dimensional fiction is sabotaged from within. How Chris Weston hasn't been driven crazy by this insanity is a mystery as Grant Morrison keeps the cards hidden as to the nature of Greg's 'illusions' even as his plots begin to come together into a semi-coherent whole. Or perhaps his psychosis has rubbed off onto another of his readers? (MAT) 7

Formerly Known as the Justice League 2

by Giffen + DeMatteis
& Maguire + Rubinstein

Funnier than the first issue, there's a good joke on almost every page, often at the heroes' expense. Elongated Man's love life and powers, and Captain Atom's radioactivity in particular are offered up as sources of mirth, but every character gets a turn at being the butt of the joke (and there's even a gag about who's got the best butt). (DK) 8

Global Frequency 10

by Ellis & Coker + Baron; WildStorm

<=> Essentially an issue-long fight scene

between two protagonists of whom we know very little and therefore have no incentive to wish either of them to win, outside of the simply stated fact that one of them is a villain who eats people and the other is a maverick anti-hero who doesn't. While it's nicely drawn, I can only wonder how long it takes Warren Ellis to write the scripts as this issue must be full of descriptions such as "panel 3: hero thumps villain. Panel 4: villain kicks hero. Panel 5: hero pokes villain in the eye." Nice work if you can get it. (RN) 5

<=> One big blood-splattered fight may not be everyone's cup of tea, but Ellis manages to bring some credibility to the gory OTT antics of his worldwide agents, as two 'biofreedback' specialists fight to the finish, manipulated by corporate interests and a long-held grudge. Illustrative collaborator Tom Coker mimics Jae Lee's moody blocks of ink, but manages to enliven some necessary dynamism for this pugilistic issue. (MAT) 6

Gotham Central 10

by Rucka & Lark

<+> Two-Face explains to the captive Renee how he outed her as a lesbian and framed her for murder and drugs and destroyed her family life, before Batman comes crashing in as they fight for the gun that's going to be used on Renee's lover. All wonderfully tense stuff, with excellent lo-fi art from Lark, but it's the last couple of pages as we wait for Renee to come out to her parents that are the most unbearable. Wonderful. (MT) 9

Hellblazer 186

by Carey & Frusin; Vertigo

<-> John takes magic mushrooms again, despite a less than happy relationship with psychedelics in the past. Mike Carey is pushing our hero into a globe-trotting series of visits to third world locations but this time around the Australasian episode feels a little rushed compared with the superior Iran tale. Still easily better than most of the Hellblazer stories since Garth Ennis left though. (RN) 7

H-E-R-O #6

by Pfeifer + Kano

<+> Andrea is trying to fit in at her new school, and the HERO dial may be just what she needs to nurture those all important friendships. A touching tale that explores the bittersweet and difficult bonds between children, with Kano's wonderfully expressive linework effortlessly capturing the emotions that Will Pfeifer conveys in a sparkling script. (TS) 7

Human Target 1

by Milligan & Pulido

Pete Milligan returns to one of his favourite themes, 'identity', with the first issue of the new ongoing series for the Human Target, a counter-assassin able to impersonate anyone. This is a compelling read with the highlight being the big revelation of the last two pages that both comes out of nowhere and fits perfectly. A must buy. (RC) 9

JLA 83

by Kelly & Cross + Nguyen

<-> President Luther considers his response to a terrorist outrage that may have been perpetrated by the Gulf state of Qurac. But only in Superman's subconscious while he's using a Martian dream machine. Perhaps the disjointedness was to clue readers in that it

was an 'imaginary story'; it's certainly not one that matters. Batman is used well, but Wonder Woman appears altogether too virile on page 21! (DK) 5

<=> Superman finds himself sliding down a slippery slope of principals when the USA declares unprovoked war on a terrorist country. And when he finally fights back after some trite soul-searching, President Lex kills him with kryptonite. And then Superman gets out of the VR machine, and it's all OK. What a hack job. The art's not much better, managing to be both inexpressive and selectively exaggerated at the same time. It's hard to believe that not too long ago this was DC's premier title. (MT) 2

The Last Man 13

by Vaughan
& Guera + Marzan; Vertigo

<=> The cover boasts that 'unless you don't know how to read there's no excuse for not picking up this title'. Sadly it doesn't mention the other reasons for not doing so: namely that the main character is about as interesting as semolina, ditto the supporting cast, that the writer doesn't seem to know where he wants to go with the plot, and that the art is serviceable at best. Don't be fooled into thinking this is Vertigo at its best. (RN) 5

The Losers 2

by Diggle & Jock; Vertigo

<=> The gang decides to bargain for its safety, and sets out to get the ultimate bargaining tool. The writing is excellent, moving from superb characterisation to tense espionage action. Jock's art is very basic and rough, but is all the better for it. Vertigo is on to a winner with this. (KG) 8

<=> After the tone was set by the explosive first issue, Andy Diggle and Jock begin their initial story arc of the rogue CIA agents out to clear their names and take down the big bad Agency at the same time. With all its tech-talk, cocky dialogue, guns and violence, this is a far cry from the usual Vertigo clichés. Even though the concept is inspired by a certain '80s TV show, Jock's loose messy brushstrokes and Diggle's expletive-peppered script makes this a little more than wholesome family entertainment. (MAT) 8

Stormwatch: Team Achilles 14

by Wright
& Smith + Nguyen; WildStorm

<=> A disturbing dream of a racist attack sweeps the nation, leading the UN strike squad to a rogue superpowered individual with a chip on his shoulder about the US administration. Micah Wright may not be particularly subtle over his issues with the American government, but certainly knows how to mould this cynicism into compelling storylines. C.P. Smith's clearly designed art is just what is needed to depict the technoladen equipment of the team. (MAT) 7

Superman/Batman 1

by Loeb & McGuinness + Vines

The compare-and-contrast approach to the Man of Steel and the Dark Knight is taken once again, but writer Jeph Loeb manages to bring fresh elements to the relationship between comics' two greatest icons. Ed McGuinness and Dexter Vines' bold artwork is perfectly suited to this title. Not sure about where Loeb is going in revealing the killer of Bruce Wayne's parents though. As far as I'm



The Flash 200

by Johns
& Kolins + Hazlewood + Dose

<=> It's all here. Zoom. Barry Allen. Hal Jordan. Wally has the fight of his life but will he have to resort to lethal force to stop Zoom? A fitting farewell to artist Scott Kolins, with the best arc of his run, handled perfectly. Which unfortunately shows incoming artist Alberto Dose's work up all the more. Chalk and cheese, if you please. (CDB) 9

<=> The Flash triumphs over Zoom, but it's a triumph tinged with sadness and regret. Their drag-down, knock-out battle sees Flash and Zoom race around the world, giving Kolins and Doug Hazlewood ample opportunity to showcase their kinetic artwork. See Zoom turn sand to glass and kick the shards in Wally's face. This landmark issue has obligatory guest appearances by Barry Allen and Hal Jordan. (DK) 8

<=> Geoff Johns seems more at home here than on any other title he writes. *Blitz* has generally been an involving emotional roller coaster for the assembled cast, as the new Zoom teaches Wally West what it takes to be a hero in his own inimitable reverse fashion. Unfortunately the conclusion, as with many of Johns' arcs, falls a little flat in the telling. Johns had an agenda to change the status quo, which diminishes some of the more dramatic events, and sadly does away with 30-odd years of character development; all to satisfy his own vision of what (and where) The Flash should be. (TS) 6

concerned, it was Joe Chill (or Jack Napier in the movies!) (SH) 8

Superman: Birthright 2

by Waid & Yu + Alanguilan

<=> Clark Kent finds himself stuck between a rock and a hard place when faced with keeping his abilities hidden. A somewhat sentimental look at Clark's Smallville days as Mark Waid flexes his continuity biceps with a keen grasp on the heritage of the material. Leinil Francis Yu will perhaps receive due praise and reward from DC, after Marvel obviously lets his talent slip through its grasp following his Wolverine stint. (CDB) 7

Sweatshop 4

by Bagge & various

<=> Peter Bagge vents more of his biting satirical cynicism against comic strip industry

hacks as Carrie attempts to set her virginal work colleagues up on dates and Freddy Ferret undergoes a radical image makeover. Although Bagge has managed to keep the comical fury turned up throughout this series, it's a pity he hasn't been able to keep up with his drawing. With artistic duties having to be taken up by folks doing barely passable Bagge imitations, the comic just doesn't have the same edge, which is a pity as the concept seemed so promising. (MAT) 7

Thundercats: Dogs of War 2

by Layman & Booth + Vey

<=> New Thundera is quickly overwhelmed by the canine invaders, leaving the aging cast contemplating siding with an ancient foe. John Layman claims to be unfamiliar with the characters, but takes perverse delight in meddling with them, as a grey-haired Lion-o, Snarf, and massacring of cute Ro-Bear

Berbils attests. Brett Booth's fine linework and nimble-looking characters capture the feline defenders perfectly. (MAT) 6

Tokyo Storm Warning 2

by Ellis & Raiz + Currie; Cliffhanger

<=> The Eva... oops, Arcangels fight off the hydra, only for Tokyo to come under attack from a greater threat. This is all very competent, with snappy writing from Warren Ellis and fine art from James Raiz, but it's still difficult to see what the point is. Apart from the inter-cultural bickering, there is little to distinguish this from the countless other big-mech series. (KG) 6

Wonder Woman #189-194

by Simonson + Ordway

<=> *The Game of the Gods*: Always meant to be an interim period between creators, Walt Simonson focuses on telling a story, exploring who Wonder Woman is, her relationship to the gods, and generally having fun with DC's, supposedly, premiere heroine. To that end, he strips her of her powers, gives her a new 'do (Oh my God, they cut Wonder Woman's hair!), instills in her a sense of humour, and gives her a badass opponent in the form of The Shattered God. This generally plays out well, but the first and last parts are definitely the strongest, while the middle is, sadly, a bit flabby. That said, the conclusion is more than satisfying, and lays to rest a supporting cast member who has taken more than his fair share of criticism. Jerry Ordway's art invokes a time when storytelling was more important than over-rendered panels, but never seems to gel with the inks of P. Craig Russell, usually a very sensitive inker. (TS) 6

Image

The Agents 3

by Gunstone & Dunn

<=> Double-dealing and treachery abound as the various players pursue their goals. The plot rattles along at a furious pace, raising more questions at every turn, with Kevin Gunstone perfectly balancing intrigue and action. Ben Dunn continues to produce strong art that makes excellent use of the black and white format. (KG) 8

Brit

by Kirkman & Moore

Robert Kirkman shows he's a dab hand at the Millar/Ellis widescreen mature superhero action style for this one-shot illustrated in a rough grey-toned style by his regular collaborator Tony Moore. Kirkman may have taken the 'mature' aspect slightly too literally as Brit stars an eponymous super-invulnerable OAP, who handles the US government's dirty black ops of parolled supervillains and monstrous inter-dimensional invaders, while also dealing with meeting his (much younger) stripper girlfriend's folks. Kirkman and Moore have created an icon for 50-something comics collectors. Shame the glossy paper stinks so much though! (MAT) 8

Masters of the Universe Volume II #4

by Staples & Santalucia + Fontana;
Image/MVCreations

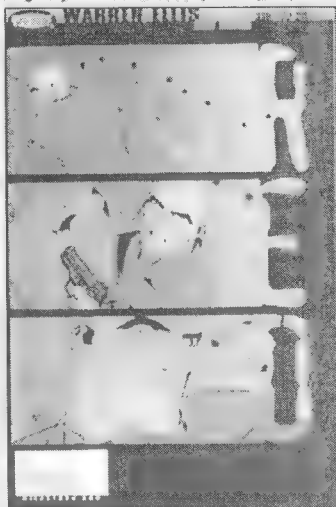
Parts of Eternia keep interchanging with an other-dimensional world, its exact opposite. This provides pain for Stratos, trouble for

Red 1

by Ellis & Hamner; Homage

While being sorely disappointed by many of Warren Ellis's recent mini and maxi titles, Red is better than most. There's nothing particularly original about its premise (retired black ops specialist is targeted by his own agency that wants to keep him quiet) but it seems to be written with a little more restraint and subtlety than much of his recent canon. As long as this doesn't evolve into yet another *Leon* clone it could prove to be a good series. Fingers crossed... (RN) 7

There's a briefing video at Langley that is shown to the new CIA directors to explain some of the realities of their job. When the video's star, retired super agent Paul Moses is nearly killed in his home by a CIA hit squad after the latest director is inaugurated, he wants to know why. It's great to see Ellis turning into an actual graphic novelist rather than staying in one place/title for too long, and his latest miniseries is firing on all cylinders. Cully Hamner's art is nicely caricatured, and if a little inexpressive this is one of the perils of drawing stoic tough guys. A definite winner. (MT) 7



He-Man... and then there's Man-At-Arms, who grows increasingly more erratic. Never have these Mattel characters been in such safe and competent hands as with this superlative creative team. The hottest retro revival out there! (CEB) 8

Masters of the Universe: Icons of Evil – Beastman

by Kirkman & Moore;
Image/MVCreations

Young Skeletor, Keldor, goes in search of a savage warrior to aid him in his future conquests. It turns out to be a case of his having bitten off more than he can chew... unlike Beastman who decides to make a meal of Keldor's head. An imaginative script by Robert Kirkman is terrifically rendered by Tony Moore. A worthwhile treat. (CEB) 7

Micronauts 9

by Jolley & Kurth + Schulz

<+> Baron Karza's conquest of Earth is almost complete, and his plan for genocide is underway. Ryan Archer seeks help from his ex and attempts to explain his diminutive scale. Meanwhile Acroyear, Galactic Defender and Knave take on the Harriers, and make short work of Red Falcon. This is shaping up to be an excellent comic in its own right, over and above being a licensed property. (DK) 8

Micronauts 10

by Jolley & Kurth + Schulz

<+> This issue opens well, as Micronauts on a murderous rampage against Baron Karza's human sympathizers is certainly something to see. However, the juxtaposition of large-scale explosions with extreme close-ups on the fighting makes it hard to know what's going on in the battle against Karza's own forces in the last half-dozen pages. (DK) 6

Powers 32

by Bendis & Oeming

<+> At the turn of the 19th century a weary amnesiac walker seeking answers for his unexplained superpowers finds a Chinese monastery full of powered people with some answers, and eventually some questions. With a great tribute to *Once Upon a Time in China*, this storyline really starts to hit its pace, leaving the reader even more anxious for the next part. As ever, outstanding story and art, if you don't read this you should – you're missing something great! (MT) 8

Powers 33

by Bendis & Oeming + Lee

<+> Brian Michael Bendis's epic revelation of the origins of the superheroes leads to immortal warrior Gora taking refuge with a wise old Chinese monk in a temple high among the hills of Peking, thus allowing Bendis the opportunity to include some kung-fu tree-jumping scenes, ably illustrated by Michael Avon Oeming. It's odd that after Bendis's previous genre-mixing work, the big plot-line on his breakthrough series should be so cliché-ridden, but the pay-offs of this arc may yet be worth it. (MAT) 7

Puffed 2

by Layman & Crosland

<+> The adventures of a guy stuck in a big dragon suit and marooned in the ghetto continues as our hero gets chased by gun-toting drug-dealers and holes up in a scummy bar to swap tales with rummies. This

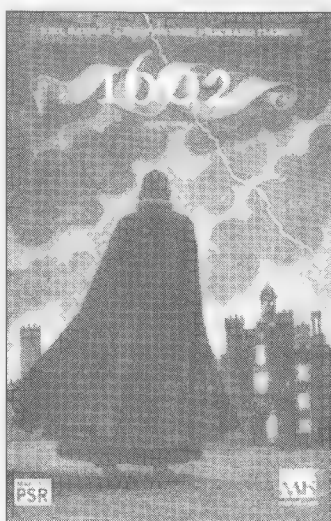
Marvel 1602 #1

by Gaiman & Kubert + Isanove;
Marvel Knights

The Marvel Universe starts 400 years early, just in time to face an apocalypse. This is all set-up, so not a lot happens, but Neil Gaiman has fun introducing us to this strange new/old world. Andy Kubert and Richard Isanove collaborate to produce a lovely looking book. A good start. (KG) 8

Gaiman reimagines the Marvel pantheon in Elizabethan times. The stunning sequence with an imprisoned Archangel is this issue's highlight. Artist Kubert and digital painter Isanove are on top form, brilliantly evoking the period. A very intriguing start to the series. (SH) 8

So the mystery is revealed as Gaiman reinterprets the Marvel Universe in the 16th century, complete with eye-patched master spies, blind Irish minstrels and the persecuted Witchbreed with their fantastical powers, all wrapped up in a conspiracy over the Templar's greatest treasure. Although fun is had spotting the characters, and Kubert's art looks sumptuous with Isanove's skilful digital painting, this series opener has the whiff of a legal-expenses earner rather than anything truly groundbreaking. (MAT) 7



is much better than I was expecting, and the lovely downbeat John Cassaday cover is an absolute joy to behold, being very nicely paced and rendered. And when I noticed the suit's eyes following the wearer's I had to go back through it all again! A little work of genius. (MT) 8

Savage Dragon 109

by Larsen

<+> Once Dragon and family have taken on Thor with his own weapons and despatched him back to God World, Erik Larsen continues his Fantastic Four homage, saving readers the trouble of searching out FF #177 by having Dragon, Jennifer and Angel menaced by a mauve Savage Dragon/Brute analogue from out of the Void. (DK) 6

Marvel

Alias 25

by Bendis & Gaydos; MAX Comics

<+> The recent Jessica Jones origin story was something of an anti-climax, so its a relief that this flashback to her traumatic and life-changing encounter with Killgrave the Purple Man is much, much better. Once again the talking head sequences are rich in emotion and characterisation – Brian Michael Bendis is a master of dialogue and could probably teach Kevin Smith a few tricks in that regard. This remains the most original superhero comic on the shelves today. (RN) 8

<+> The tortured Jessica awakens to find herself in another compromised situation yet bares her soul to Luke Cage, revealing her dark secret. Bendis's scripting of her heartbreaking revelations show the once-laughable Purple Man in a disturbing new light. Mark Bagley comes back on board to illustrate Jess's far-from-breezy costume-clad flashbacks. (MAT) 8

Amazing Spider-Man 55

by Avery + Straczynski
& Romita Jr + Hanna

Peter takes an under-achieving, potential-filled pupil under his web only to discover that his actions as Spider-Man have had a dramatic effect on her family. This leaves him with quite a conundrum. And then there's

Ezekiel. Fiona Avery steps in to script, and very competently too, while John Romita Jr can do no wrong. No signs of staleness. (CEB) 7

<+> Peter Parker learns that his actions as a superhero have consequences, even on the families of bad guys. Memories of Avery's recent writing stint on Image's awful Tomb Raider: Journeys are banished here as she delivers a tender, humorous script that equals regular scribe J. Michael Straczynski's superlative best. Admittedly, 'the kids' might find it all rather boring, but never mind the action – feel the quality. (JE) 8

<+> In the Sixties the Spider-Man comic set new standards with its soap opera theatrics. Almost 30 years later the social life of Peter Parker as written by Straczynski pales before the gritty realism of Brian Michael Bendis's Daredevil. Spider-Man's out of costume world feels safe and reassuring in a comfortable family values kind of way and remains out of step with the harder edge of life as we know it. The current run on the title is OK but the approach needs to move with the times if the title wants to match its *Leading Edge* run of yore. (RN) 6

<+> Avery assists her mentor, scripting the latest tale as Peter comes to the aid of another of his disadvantaged pupils. More ethical dilemmas ensue as Spidey deals with the thugs, but finds he was in part to blame for the situation. Avery has Straczynski's light-hearted and life-affirming take on the character to a tee, while Romita Jr shows his talent for illustrating school drama as well as street-level action. (MAT) 7

Avengers 69

by Johns & Coipel + Lanning

<+> The Avengers decide to do something about the situation. This is a lot better than previous issues, as Geoff Johns has eased off on the naive and confused political comment in favour of action. The art team does the best job on this title since Alan Davis left. (KG) 7

<+> Warbird arrives to pick up the remains of the devastated team, while the crazed Red Skull explains his intention to forge America to his Nazi ideals. Johns' mix of real-life worries over terrorism and mistrust of government with superhero action may seem crass, but it pushes the characters'

adventures into new territory, making the stories more credible. Unfortunately Olivier Coipel's stylish designs and Andy Lanning's finely lined inks still look murky, much to the title's detriment. (MAT) 7

Born 2

by Ennis & Robertson + Palmer

<+> Frank Castle's stability is looking into a bottomless pit of insanity. Garth Ennis's origin epic offers everything you should expect from one of his scripts, but Darick Robertson and Tom Palmer really bring it to life in a way that makes you want to throw up at times. And the crazy thing is, I like it like that! (CDB) 8

<+> Reading between the lines it was always obvious to many that the Punisher was at best mad, and at worst a self-deluded psychopath. In this miniseries Ennis traces Frank Castle's back story to 1971 and the last days in 'Nam where we see that in actual fact the murder of Castle's family was nothing more than the straw that broke the camel's back. Here is a man who was always going to go off the edge at some point. The only question was when and why. (RN) 7

The descent into the heart of darkness continues as Ennis dumps the slapstick humour of his Punisher work and concentrates on what brutalised Frank Castle during the arse-end of the 'Nam conflict. Robertson's down-and-dirty style is attuned to the grime and violence of the story, which flourishes under veteran Palmer's scratchy inking. (MAT) 8

Captain America 15

by Austen & Lee; Marvel Knights

Cap has to wrestle with two things simultaneously: the Interrogator, and questions regarding his past. When the villain gains the upper hand and Cap finds his ethics more flexible than ever, how will he respond to a second death to avenge? Another brooding issue, but there can be only so many of these until things start feeling lethargic. Next issue promises a pick up in pace, however. (CEB) 7

Captain America 16

by Austen & Lee; Marvel Knights

<+> Chuck Austen and Jae Lee conclude their tale as the sinister interrogator plays on Cap's desires and fears, but guess what? It was all just a dream, as Namor comes to the rescue! Once more the sluggish pace makes Lee's evocatively moody art seem somewhat pretentious and stilted. It remains lush, but let's hope Marvel plans a speech-bubble-less collectors' edition, as the cranky and lifeless dialogue is too much to bear. (MAT) 6

Captain Marvel 12

by David & Reis + Sotomayor

Rick vows to take down Karl Coven but requires super-powered assistance to do so. The Captain, however, has his own problems as his insane antics have gained him numerous enemies. Ivan Reis is a hugely talented artist but, remembering the fluid and fun work of ChrisCross, he does appear out of place here. Peter David is having as much fun with the crazy Marv as he did with the Hulk's Mr. Fixit persona, so the writing's obviously wonderful. (CEB) 8

Daredevil 49

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<+> Bullseye returns looking more like Colin

Farrell than before. For a sickening moment the threat of an horrific death for Milla appears real enough, as Bullseye seeks to score a hat-trick for killing Daredevil's girlfriends. In revenge, Daredevil plumbs new depths of savagery. (DK) 7

<+> Daredevil tries to stop Bullseye murdering yet another girlfriend. Alex Maleev's art is getting better with each issue – the fluency of the splash page fight scenes is breathtaking and highly cinematic. The script is taut and pressing: witness a more savage DD emerging, scarily well-drawn; the disappointment that the Bullseye strand must be resolved so quickly (presumably in time for #50) does not detract from this murky atmosphere and highly pleasurable crime comic. (IM) 10

<=> Daredevil squares up against Bullseye in a rare action issue of this remarkable series. Brian Michel Bendis hasn't put a foot wrong since he began his run and he has essentially claimed the character as his own; no mean feat when you count the number of classic writers who have played with the puppet strings long before Bendis's comics career ever took off. As excellent as ever. (RN) 8

<+> After his surprise appearance last issue, the man in red faces his arch-nemesis in a bloody fight to the finish. Complaining spandex fans will be glad to hear that Matt is in full costume throughout, and that his fight with Bullseye lasts a nose-breaking 12 pages, proving once and for all that Bendis can do more than write talking-heads. Likewise, Maleev shows his ability to depict action-packed scenes, but his film noir art also excels at capturing the emotions of the characters' faces, even though Bullseye looks like Grant Morrison. (MAT) 8

The Eternal 3

by Austen

& Walker + Coleby; MAX Comics

<+> This unusual cross between 2001 and *Boogie Nights* continues to improve as dissent and jealousy spread among the Eternals, and they begin to consider the possibility of rebelling against the Celestials and settling with Earth women. But Kurassus receives a stay of execution and brings a bloody rebellion of his own into play and a wonderfully worrying cliffhanger. Chuck Austen continues to write way above his usual form, and Kev Walker's excellent clean stylised art is perfect for this story. Check it out if you get the chance, if you're old enough, of course. (MT) 9

<=> More prehistoric sexual drama as tensions between the Eternals become heightened as their infatuated leader risks infuriating his Celestial masters over their liaisons with the evolved Earth women. Austen manages to avoid being too crass with his portrayal of the Kirby creations' carnal activities, helped in no small part by Walker's abrasive lines which depict both subtle and graphic events. (MAT) 7

Exiles 29

by Austen & Henry + Morales

<+> Having 'quantum leaped' into the regular Marvel Universe, Chuck Austen's astutely characterised script gives this thrilling plot some memorable moments as the Exiles meet the X-Men and get caught up in a brief but nasty fight with Lobo and his vicious werewolves, who literally tear Morph apart. Well accompanied by Clayton Henry's wonderful understated but still emotive artwork, this is the best issue of

Silver Surfer 1

by Chariton + Weiss & Milx

Children are going missing, linked to alien abduction, but for what purpose and why now? Dan Chariton and Stacy Weiss take a human approach (strangely enough) to Marvel's angst-ridden alien. An intriguing beginning with Milx performing at 100 per cent. When the Surfer eventually appears in a double-page splash he is magnificent. Welcome back to Planet Earth, Surfer. We will certainly enjoy your stay. (CDB) 8

Behind a cool '70s-style cover by Joe Jusko showing the Surfer in all his glory lies a tale in which the Sentinel of the Spaceways barely appears. Normally this would be annoying, but writers Chariton and Weiss have created an absorbing story which begins with an alien abduction in Africa, and then moves on to the USA where a single mother and her autistic daughter have an encounter with the title character. An unusual take on one of Marvel's most enigmatic heroes, beautifully illustrated by the mysteriously-monickered Milx. (SH) 8

There's a tendency in hero comics to write in story arcs rather than individual issues, and this is a perfect example. After an entire issue feeling sorry for a poor single mother with an autistic child, we finally see the Surfer for two whole panels at the very end, with no dialogue. One could almost think the writers didn't know what to do with him, an idea that their heavy-handed character building bears out. This has no



relation to the Surfer soaring the cosmos on the cover, and I can't see many kids or adults returning for #2. Nice art though. (MT) 2

Just as the PR spiel claimed, the new volume opens, concentrating less on the tortured alien with the surf board and more on his effects on the humans he shares the planet with, as a determined young mother finds her autistic child swept away in the middle of the night. Chariton and Weiss's script creates some much-needed mystery around the character, while artist Milx does an outstanding job evoking an air of realism missing from previous cosmic hero incarnations – and the rather routine cover. Pity that the printer managed to screw up the page order though. Has Marvel's cost-cutting now run to no proofs too? (MAT) 7

Exiles for quite some time. (IM) 8

Fantastic Four 500

by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

Marvel celebrates its first 500th issue, and in what style! Mark Waid and Mike Wieringo's excellent *Unthinkable* storyline ends as well as it began, with Reed Richards – ever the analytic and egotistical scientist – facing up to his fear of magic in order to tackle the domineering Doctor Doom. The family has to literally go to hell and back... but will it be a happy ending? This is the Fantastic Four at its best. (CEB) 8

Fantastic Four 501

by Waid & Jones

<=> What's eating Franklin Richards? After all, spending time in Hell being tormented by demons, is just another day in the life of. Right? Mark Waid, bless him. Every time he turns sales around on a Marvel book with insight and vision (remember Captain America?), Marvel makes him bend over and take it up the tailpipe. (With apologies to Jim Carrey: *Liar, Liar*.) Enjoy the run while it lasts. "What a revoltin' development!" (CDB) 6

Incredible Hulk 58

by Jones & Fernandez

<=> Bruce Jones is a consistently intriguing writer on the series. Consistency, however, is something the visuals unfortunately lack due to the ever-changing art teams – Lea Fernandez's chiaroscuro graphics being particularly bland in this current story arc. (JE) 7

Namor 4

by Jemas + Watson & Larroca + Miki

<=> Family trouble on land threatens to spoil the natural beauty of Atlantis and sour the blossoming relationship between the Atlantean prince and his human companion. Andi Watson's latest chapter of Namor's life unfolds as more tensions arise between the young lovers, hinting at tragic events to come. Salvador Larroca's attractive art may be the main pull for this series, but Watson's script is more than just a mouthpiece for Bill Jemas's concept-led rebranding of the character. (MAT) 7

New Mutants 3

by Defilippis + Weir & Grant + Stull

<+> Slow to start, this bright series is finally finding its feet and its heart. Dani Moonstar recruits a mutant whose touch brings death, and visits Magma, still comatose from her crucifixion in Uncanny X-Men, and in doing so finally explains her reasons for returning to Xavier's fold. Keiron Grant's manga-influenced art well suits this teen angst title, while Nunzio Defilippis's script is tight and emotive but still light. (IM) 8

New X-Men 144

by Morrison & Bachalo + Townsend

<=> The plot races along like a cheetah on speed. In fact, if it wasn't for every issue's lengthy plot synopsis, I would've been left behind months ago. Meanwhile, Chris Bachalo proves himself to be the consummate 'convention artist': oodles of cumbersome detail that inhibits the visual

storytelling's flow and clarity – a visceral, albeit coarse visual aesthetic that is quite ugly compared to Bachalo's latter 1990s work on DC's Shade. (JE) 7

<=> Wolverine, Cyclops and Fantomex pick over the debris of the Weapon Plus programme and find themselves trapped in the time-accelerated environment of The World with flying whale-brained 'car cops' and Weapon XV. Perhaps this could only have come from the imagination of Grant Morrison, but it's really not as interesting as it sounds. (DK) 6

<+> *Assault on Weapon Plus* continues as Wolverine, Cyclops and the mysterious Fantomex go up against the latest product of the program, Weapon XV. The sheer imagination that Morrison brings to this sci-fi action tale is matched only by the crazed inventiveness of the art team, the only worthy successors that Frank Quitely has had since he left the title. Nifty. (MT) 8

<=> Logan, Cyclops and Fantomex enter the hidden temporarily frozen breeding space of the Weapon Plus project in an attempt to halt the destructive progress of Weapon XV. More Morrison madness as he continues to add his own spin on the whole Wolverine saga while also telling an action-packed adventure. Bachalo's eccentric artwork may seem the best choice for Morrison's style of narration, but unfortunately his chunky characters and ink-sodden pages don't complement this work at all. (MAT) 8

Paradise X: A

by Krueger & Braithwaite + Reinhold

Loki, Black Knight and Reject form a new Avengers trio, while each Cosmic Angel encounters a different aspect of Captain Marvel. Hawkeye fires what may be the most fateful arrow of his career, with spectacularly hideous results. The heroes, poised for countless issues to take on Marvel, stand even more poised by the end of this special, but for the treachery of the Kree military. (DK) 6

Spectacular Spider-Man 2

by Jenkins & Ramos + Faucher

<=> Could the Venom symbiote be looking for a new host? Paul Jenkins' trend for humorous, classic villain Spidey smack-ups continues. No real need for a title change then. On the other hand, Humberto Ramos is ideal for the action-laden creepiness which is Peter Parker's world. Hats off to Studio F for top notch colour control. It looks terrific. (CDB) 7

Trouble 1

by Millar & Dodson + Dodson; Epic

Mark Millar's new 'girls in trouble' series for the Epic relaunch has a cover that pretty well jumps off the shelves and grabs your attention from the outset. Unfortunately this first issue suffers from a slow build up as the Gwen Stacey/Mary Jane Watson look-alikes take a working vacation in a vague timeless version of America. Where it goes from here is anyone's guess, but as this is Mark Millar we're talking about, I have faith enough to check in again next issue. Millar has earned my trust. (RN) 6

Truth: Red, White & Black 7

by Morales & Baker

<=> Captain America uncovers the web of conspiracy surrounding the super-soldier

programme and his African-American counterpart's demise during WWII, but finally meets the man himself apparently living in total obscurity to everyone save black celebrities! This slightly ridiculous notion detracts from the credibility of Robert Morales's daring concept, while his portrayal of unrepentant Colonel Price is more black and white than any racial divide. Kyle Baker's exaggerated poses pay homage to Cap's creator Jack Kirby, but the loose linework is distinctly his own. (MAT) 7

Ultimate X-Men 36

by Bendis & Finch + Thibert

<=> Another explosive opening from Brian Michael Bendis as the burnt and battered Logan lands in Hell's Kitchen, pursued by secret government forces and a certain urban defender in red. Bendis manages to handle his larger cast as skilfully as he does solo characters, but do we really need another Weapon X/Wolverine adventure? Where have the other mutants disappeared to? Dave Finch's slick muscular art reveals its old-style Image origins, but he somehow manages to meet the title's monthly deadline! (MAT) 7

Ultimates 11

by Millar & Hitch + Neary

<=> As each new issue of the Ultimates hits the streets I leave my local comic shop with a happy grin on my face, because I now know that I'm pretty much guaranteed an A+ read. Marvel's willingness to allow the creative team as much time as it needs to produce such a high-quality product is the key issue. In another time or place this title could have been riddled with fill-in issues and suffered a significant loss in quality. Instead we're left with the 11th volume of one of the greatest (if not THE greatest) superhero stories ever committed to paper. (RN) 9

<=> The Chitauri leader breaks Supervillain Rule #1 by revealing their plans in full to a shocked Wasp, and this stunned reader who thought Mark Millar's postmodern take on the Avengers was above such clichés. However, he confounds things further with the 'surprise' return of our heroes to save the day. While Millar manages to disappoint, Bryan Hitch continues to astound; with realistic and finely detailed art he carves out a new validity to representational style, which has been lacking in recent years. (MAT) 7

Ultimate Spider-Man 43

by Bendis & Bagley + Thibert

<=> When Storm, Jean and Kitty Pryde of the Ultimate X-Men introduce themselves to possible new mutant Geldoff, they also bump into Spider-Man. The X-women are cool but their new friends are overawed, with Geldoff 'humorously' fainting. Repeatedly. Then accidentally destroying their plane. Stylish and funny, if unsuited and arch, Brian Michael Bendis writes better and more acutely elsewhere but Mark Bagley's art is, as usual, clean and clearly defined. (IM) 7

Uncanny X-Men 427

by Austen & Kim + Morales

<=> Chuck Austen provides the inevitable exploration of Archangel's suddenly healing blood: he goes to a hospital to heal their patients. The scripting of Jubilee and Husk's mourning of Skin's death is clumsy and superficial, but Steve Kim's warm and affectionate art is lovely and rescues the issue. While the mutant prejudice theme is uninspired, the ending is a genuinely

Supreme Power 1

by Straczynski & Frank + Sibal;
MAX Comics

A fresh reinterpretation of Marvel's Justice League homage. J. Michael Straczynski applies a real-world approach, building on the groundbreaking work of Mark Gruenwald's historic miniseries. Gary Frank invigorates his work with expression and clarity. And if you buy the Special Edition you get two classic Squadron Supreme/Avengers issues by Roy Thomas and the legendary John Buscema. (CDB) 9

Straczynski resurrects the Squadron Supreme, a group of characters with which I was not previously familiar, in spectacular fashion. This opening chapter essentially retells the Superman origin story with several shocking and dark twists. The result is somewhat disturbing yet plausible, mixing in elements of *The Truman Show* and *The X-Files*. Frank and Jon Sibal provide gorgeous artwork, making this a very promising debut. The Special Edition of this issue also features the Squadron's first appearances in two rather baffling, albeit nicely John Buscema-illustrated, issues of *The Avengers*. (SH) 9

This new JMS title shows a lot of promise based on its first issue. Think *Watchmen*-like as the author revamps the Squadron Supreme for the 'real world'. Hyperion (Superman in all but name) gets the revisionist treatment this month with an original enough stab at what the US government would do if a superpowered alien baby did actually crash land in Kansas. Definitely a title to watch. (RN) 7

A space pod crashes in the mid-US and a couple takes the baby within as their own. That is until US black ops burst in, steal the child and indoctrinate it to the American way. Straczynski tackles the origins of Marvel's own uber-man in a very modern cynical manner, updating the concept for a new audience. It's all very cool, but perhaps slightly too similar territory to Straczynski's previous *Top Cow* work to be exceptional, right down to collaboration with Frank and his detailed artwork. However, the MAX Comics line allows the creators to let loose, creating a much more startling story. (MAT) 8



exciting, if unoriginal, twist. (IM) 5

Uncanny X-Men 428

by Austen & Phillips

<=> Despite the Nightcrawler cover, this is a Mystique story, revealing Kurt's conception and birth. Young, manipulative and cruel, Mystique has yet to figure how to make her guile work for her, leaving her vulnerable, exposed and leading to the abandonment of her baby. Sean Phillips' artwork hams up every scene but Chuck Austen's writing isn't entirely unsympathetic to Mystique's predicament and avoids some lazy characterisation. (IM) 6

Wolverine 3

by Rucka & Robertson + Palmer

<=> Hunting Lucy Braddock's killers has turned into a drawn-out and dull affair, thanks to Greg Rucka's lacklustre plotting, which stretches a five-page story into a full comic and dares to end it with a laughable 'cliffhanger' that carries no tension whatsoever. Darick Robertson's art is exaggerated in places, but his facial expressions are generally excellent and give life to a weak script. (IM) 4

Venom 3

by Way & Herrerra + Cuevas

<=> Venom continues to stalk the crew of the research base, and a nicely claustrophobic little chiller goes down the tubes as an alien accountant appears and shoots him with a laser mobile phone. The plot is silly, the characterisation barely adequate, and the over-caricatured art, while being terribly trendy, makes it very hard to tell what's going on at any given time. A let down. (MT) 2

X-Men Unlimited 49

by Willingham & Shannon

<=> Spotlighting Nightcrawler allows the fuzzy elf to excel in acrobatic swashbuckling as he saves a young girl thought lost in caves. This thin tale, short on ideas, isn't helped by Kelsey Shannon's blasé art, which looks like Disney forcing manga through a carwash. Nothing has changed by story's end and we learn zero more about Nightcrawler. A filler issue which would only mildly entertain if your age matched the score the book deserves. (IM) 4

X-Treme X-Men 28

by Claremont & Kordey + Hanna

<=> Sage and Bishop share lighter moments together playing detectives, and then 'flying' football (mutant Quidditch?), while Shadowcat strives to escape Stryker. Chris Claremont weaves together too many threads in too few pages to make this satisfying, and while Igor Korday's linework is sometimes pretty, Scott Hanna's inks too often overwhelm them. His awkwardly thick and messy finishing makes an already wordily scripted Wolverine fight scene into particularly hard work, which is frustrating because our guy loses and it's not easy to interpret how or why. (IM) 6

US Indies

Angry Youth Comix Volume II #5

by Ryan; Fantagraphics Books

Fantagraphics produces some good comics but this isn't one of them. The toilet humour which fills these pages isn't the slightest bit amusing, while the "adults only" label is

surely designed to entice the only category of reader who will find it so: kids. If creator Johnny Ryan wants to get this working, he should study some British comedians. Absolute tripe. (CEB) 2

Boneyard 11

by R. Moore; NBM Publishing

<=> A fight breaks out following the revelation that Roxanne is really the demon Lilith, 'mother of all vampires', come to claim Paris's cemetery for her own ends. After everything else has failed, she resorts to threatening Abbey to increase her bargaining power with Paris. Lilith proves more than a match for Abbey, but reinforcements come to the rescue. A compelling package of action, excruciating agony, wise-cracking and drama. (DK) 7

Hipflask: Elephantmen 1

by Starking + Casey
& Ladrone; Active Images

In a sprawling *Blade Runner*-style metropolis, Comcraft's mascot, the anthropomorphic walrus, Hipflask, struggles to make a living as a detective in a society not partial to talking animals. Joe Casey delivers the sci-fi paraphernalia required for the script – dark dystopian future, corrupt corporate dealings, and time travel – in a very competent manner, but it is Ladrone's art that is this book's main selling point. His influences are worn on the sleeve – Moebius and Kirby – but his detailed panels and Euro-style palette brings a quality to proceedings that wouldn't at first be expected. (MAT) 7

James Kochalka's Sketchbook Diaries 3

by Kochalka;
Top Shelf Productions; \$7.95

James Kochalka has drawn a daily diary comic strip since 1998, and this collects a year's worth from 2001 to 2002. From the surreal to the funny, the observational to the drunken, these are testament to the fact that the creator's imagination works overtime. The "real time" essence gives the work that much more substance. Classic Kochalka. (CEB) 8

Love and Rockets Volume 2 #8

by Hernandez + Hernandez;
Fantagraphics

<=> Jaime Hernandez's cult Maggie storyline continues. Although her antics are fun in an alternative soap-opera style, for the uninitiated it's nearly as impenetrable as the most long-winded X-Men plot, with its recurring characters' convoluted histories. Those less in the know may find more fun in Beto's zany and surreal strips. (MAT) 7

Luba 7

by G. Hernandez; Fantagraphics

As a meteor threatens all life on Earth, Steve finds himself spending his final hours running errands, Hector is in trouble with the law, and Luba and Khamo deal with gangsters. An accomplished issue by Gilbert Hernandez, who – with his innocent-looking yet complex artwork and considered structure – never fails to impress. (CEB) 7

The Marquis: A Sin of One

by Davis; Oni Press

Another chance to dip into the sinister horrors of Guy Davis's fevered imagination as

the avenging Marquis peruses a malevolent demon plaguing the decaying 17th century opulence of his city. Davis pours effort into creating this disturbed world with his detailed yet scratchy style. Perhaps it would be too indulgent to ask for an ongoing series as the story is suffering from making only occasional appearances. (MAT) 8

The Norm: The Twelve Steps

by Jantze; Norm.Com Publishing

A study of human nature, one which is quite refreshingly lighthearted. Michael Jantze's energetic storytelling uses humour and wide-eyed enthusiasm – as well as an innovative utilisation of the comic medium – to pull us into Norm's world as he prepares for his wedding. Highly competent, with "best-seller" written all over it. (CEB) 8

On the Far Side with Dead Folks 3

by Lansdale + Truman; Avatar Press

<> Things come to a grim but quick conclusion as the Bounty Hunter and friends make their escape from the deranged zombie-taming Lazarus and his fun-park headquarters. Although the atmosphere is tense throughout and Tim Truman's art is suitably reminiscent of *Mad Max*, I can't help thinking that a three-part comicbook adaptation that costs as much as the short story collection that it was taken from isn't such good value for money. (MT) 6

Paper Museum

by various; Jungle Boy Press

A bevy of upcoming creators gather together for this Xeric-supported black and white anthology. The stories tap into the EC/*Twilight Zone* vein of storytelling, with horror and fantasy throughout the four strips. Shaun Crystal illustrates Jai Nitz's avenging cyber-cowboy in a stripped-down cartoony fashion; Tom Fowles's disturbed WWI veteran encounters horrors in war and on returning home; while B. Clay Moore and Mike Giba reveal that even superheroes can rely on ex-girlfriends. (MAT) 7

SPX 2003

by various;
Comic Book Legal Defence Fund

Another weighty tome to celebrate the Expo convention while creating funds for the CBLDF, this time gathered under the theme of travel. As usual, it's difficult to judge which of more than 50 contributors will break out next year, but standouts include the honest autobio of Jessica Fink, Shane Durgee's surreal wish fantasies, Karl Kersch's and Brenden Fletcher's cat, Metaphrog's cute childlike daydream fantasies, another of R. Sikoryak's comical 'Tim-Tim' pastiches, the delicate art of Parrish Baker's animal road-trip and Eve Englezos and Joshua Moutray's intriguing conversational snapshots throughout the book. (MAT) 7

Strange Embrace

by Hine; Active Images; \$14.95

David Hine's best work is back in print after 10 years. This disturbing tale of a young Indian boy, a twisted psychic, a broken old man and the secrets they hold is assured to unsettle the reader. As Peter Milligan says in the introduction "Strange Embrace is dark. And very strange". And then some. (TP) 9

Thor: Vikings 1

by Ennis & Fabry; MAX Comics

A barbaric shipload (I said ship, ship!) of zombie Vikings find themselves, after a cursed voyage, at the ports of Manhattan. Mayhem ensues in Garth Ennis's sadistically sick style. And first mate Glenn Fabry serves up a gruesome graphic gruel of violence and vulgarity. Yum. (CDB) 7

Cursed by the Wise Man of a ransacked village to roam the ocean for eternity, Harald Jaekelsson's Viking raiders, transformed into the undead, eventually arrive in present-day New York to cause mayhem. Ennis's uncomplicated plotting, Fabry's crisp line drawing and Paul Mounts's warm and vibrant colour palette complement one another perfectly. I can hardly wait to see how this develops over five issues. (DK) 9

Ennis is sometimes guilty of sidelining his main character when he writes a miniseries or one-shot and such is the case with *Thor Vikings*. Pretty much what you get in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, but giving Mr Ennis the benefit of the doubt that this is all just setting up the main story, we're no doubt in store for some suitably over-the-top action scenes mixed with his trademark black humour. His take on Thor should be interesting to see and this may be the first superhero he treats seriously. (RN) 7

Ennis provides another perfunctory superhero script for Fabry to fulfil his dreams of illustrating the Norse God turned superhero, as a crew of bloodthirsty undead Vikings lands in New York, to the bemusement of its citizens. Fabry's fuzzed-up lines reach the standard of his previous work with violent Celts, but his Thor looks out of place in a spandex costume. Ennis's only concession is that he gets to cut loose with the gore and violence for this 'mature' MAX Comics title. (MAT) 6



The Vision of Escaflowne 1

by Aki; TokyoPop; \$9.99

Hitomi appears to be an average student until she wakes up on another world and is told she is destined to pilot Escaflowne. She has no idea how, and her arrogant ally, Prince Van, is no help. The characters barely develop: Hitomi's constant whining and Van's yelling gets very wearing. This, along with the shallow plot (really one long scrap between giant robots) lets down the decent art. More suitable for the younger reader. (CEB) 5

X-Day 1

by Mizushiro; TokyoPop; \$9.99

School's stressing Rika. Not only is she a fading former star athlete but she also has to keep facing the guy who dumped her. It's all

getting too much and so she and a group of fellow misfits decide to put an end to the school once and for all. This engaging story – with its terrifically innovative use of the Japanese right-to-left format – will fit snugly into anyone's manga collection. (CEB) 7

Canadian Indies

Transformers: Armada 14

by Furman & Figueroa + To;
DreamWave Productions

<+> The Autobots and the Decepticons are surprised by a visitor from another reality, as Galvatron turns up. Simon Furman returns to

X-Statix 11

by Milligan & Allred

<> Mutant skateboarder El Guapo is introduced as the latest member of X-Statix. Writing and art are as good as ever, and yet there is a feeling that this title has lost its way a little, settling into something of a rut. (KG) 6

<> Enter El Guapo the handsome one, fetchingly drawn by Mike Allred, to spice up the team, show off and seduce. Sending up Thor, his hammer, and such essence-linked heroes is easy, but Peter Milligan wrings great lines out of it, while showing the male weakness for flesh to be as pathetic as it usually is. Elsewhere, Doop's alien language is cryptically translated on the letters page. (IM) 9

<> The egotistical El Guapo manages to fit in perfectly with the media-friendly mutants, but learns not to take his woman (or should that be skateboard?) for granted. Milligan continues to satirically play up his characters and their pitfalls, as they go on about their celebrity lives in the media's (or should that be Doop's?) gaze. Meanwhile Allred's clean line artwork looks invigorated after his breather, as he takes up a finer style to illustrate the team's misadventures. (MAT) 8



writing one of his best Generation One characters and the kind of story that made his Marvel UK work so brilliant. Meanwhile, Don Figueroa makes the havoc look spectacular. Superbly done, chaps. (KG) 8

Transformers: Generation One Volume 2 #4

by Mick & Lee + Armstrong + Garcia
+ Poblete; DreamWave Productions

<> The Autobots discover the secrets behind Shockwave's regime, just as things go from bad to worse above ground. Pat Lee's art still grates, but Brad Mick continues to write a stirring and action-packed tale. Some of the details are a little confused, but this remains an impressive comic. (KG) 7

UK Indies

Burglar Bill 2

by Grist; Dancing Elephant Press

<> The popularity of his superhero Jack Staff provides Paul Grist with the finance for the unfinished adventures of one of his more down-to-earth creations. Light-fingered Bill finds himself saddled with the friendship of beret-wearing (showing this was written a few years back!) Wybourn at a charity function that quickly turns ugly. Grist's relaxed style and clear cartoony art show just how accomplished he was, even earlier in his career. (MAT) 7

Njin 0

by Haley & Boulwood; com.x

August, and com.x releases its first comic of 2003. While it exhibits the company's usual high production values and looks slick, is it a triumphant fanfare of a return, heralding a new era of quality and deadline adherence? Is it hell. Njin is a weak story of an immortal blue-collar space captain who talks in a broad Yorkshire accent (when the writer remembers to include it). A less obvious swipe of Tank Girl than Bazooka Jules is, it still reads like someone's bad idea that's been scrawled on a beer mat just before closing time. Pity Daniel Boulwood for having to waste his time drawing this nonsense. Extremely silly, and not in a good way. (MT) 4

UK Newsstand

Commando 3638

by unknown; DC Thomson

<+> In *Codenome 'Courage'*, a Belgian cartoonist uses his newspaper strip to relay information vital to the survival of his cousin's wartime resistance group! Only in *Commando* can such a wonderfully ludicrous premise actually work, and manage to be readable at the same time. (SM) 7

Fun Size Dandy 142

by various; DC Thomson

Top striker Owen Goal is driven "football crazy" in a surreal adventure. Meanwhile, silly superhero Bananaman takes a break from the fight against crime – duped into a horrible holiday by the diabolical Dr Gloom. Colourful entertainment for younger readers. (SM) 7

Judge Dredd Magazine 209

by various; Rebellion

<+> Gordon Rennie writes *Hong Kong*, a Judge Dredd thriller with a classic feel, and

John Wagner gives Judge Death the straight-faced horror story treatment he deserves. The stylish mob drama *Bendatti Vendetta* returns, and *Harry Twenty on the High Rock* is reprinted by popular demand, which goes to show there's no accounting for taste. *Xtinct* may be forgiven its hoary old talking dinosaurs premise if the story develops well. (DK) 8

Lone Wolves

by Abnett & Richardson;
Black Library Publishing; £15

Sergeant Marlin and his regiment are trapped on an intolerant ice world, overrun by unrelenting monsters. With no food, and frostbite setting in, the soldiers' fate appears sealed: then barbaric, berserk warriors the Space Wolves appear. Desperation quickly turns into determination. Writer Dan Abnett's sci-fi influences are felt, but together with Karl Richardson's poignant penciling, he establishes more atmosphere and intelligent pacing than any Hollywood movie. Absorbing action-packed entertainment. (CEB) 7

2000 AD Progs 1349-1352

by various; Rebellion

<=> Prog 1349 is replete with endings to make way for the *Summer Assault*, which begins with Dredd, Slaine, and a corking new Strontium Dog yarn in full colour. Leviathan is an eerie fantasy of the age of steam by the great team of Ian Edgington and D'Israeli. Slaine becomes a worthwhile read from Prog 1351, which is more than can be said for Bec and Kawl. (DK) 7

Warhammer Monthly 72

by Abnett + Hopgood & various;
Black Library Publishing

Four gritty sci-fi and fantasy stories. Dan Abnett and Kev Hopgood bring us the bloody tale of Malus Darkblade who vows to crush the Ulthuan; readers' votes can decide the outcome of *Last Stand on Yavor*; Mitchel Scanlon and Jon Haward deliver an accomplished vampire tale, while *Deathwatch* is the final offering. It's always nice to see an original, well-produced comic... even more so when it's British! (CEB) 7

UK Books

Comic Book Movies

by Hughes; Virgin Books; £16.99

Interesting cash-in on the current Hollywood affair with sequential art. David Hughes covers all the obvious films (*Batman*, *Superman*, *Spider-Man*, *Hulk*) with intensive minutiae but skims through the sequels and glaring omissions like *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and *Swamp Thing* stand out. It also lacks any serious pictures, 14 in total, not even one per film. (TP) 7

The Slings and Arrows Comic Guide

edited by Plowright, written by various; £19.95 Slings & Arrows

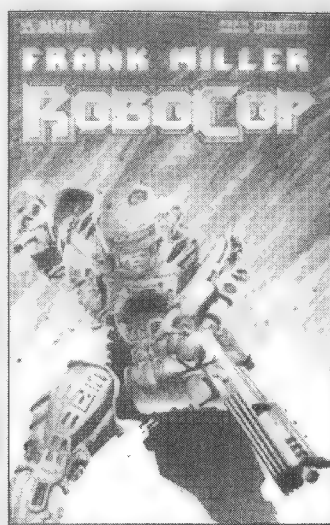
<=> It's been six years since the first edition and this "Halliwell/Time Out/Maltin" guide to comics has doubled its entries from 2,500 to over 5,000. That's a lot of comics under the bridge. Sadly, not much on British ones, perhaps a follow-up book? Still, totally unique, essential and guaranteed to raise ire

Frank Miller's Robo Cop 1

by Miller + Grant & Ryp

Frank Miller's earlier drafts of his screenplay for the 1990 movie *Robocop 2* have been dusted off to form the basis of this nine-part miniseries. The cops-on-strike angle is familiar from the film, but the child trafficking plot did not make it to the screen. Juan Jose Ryp's goony, gory artwork is over the top even for *Robocop*, but Robo-fans may find this a worthwhile read. (SH) 7

It's probably no great surprise in the light of the success of many licensed properties that gore and violence specialists Avatar pursued a few of their own. Perhaps it's more surprising that their first is a faithful adaptation of Miller's *Robocop 2* script. Steven Grant is given the duty of translating Miller's post-*Dark Knight* 1980s cynicism into comicbook format, which he does brilliantly. Ryp's Geoff Darrow-esque hyper-detailed and blood-splattered art ably captures Miller's violent satire. Unfortunately Nimbus's bright colours mire the knowing bleakness somewhat. (MAT) 7



thanks to its subjective nature. (TP) 8

Small Press

Angel Nebula books 1-2

by McGee;
£3 each from T. McGee
143 Meldon Drive,
Bilston WV14 8BE

What connects the mysterious disappearance of a transport ship with the strange events on a Martian base? Tony McGee's sci-fi comic combines a cleverly disjointed narrative with some interesting art reminiscent of that of Richard Corben. The plotting isn't as confident as it could be, but otherwise this is an excellent title. (KG) 7

Captain Cooties

by unknown; from
captaincooties@hotmail.com

Following the adventures of Captain Cooties, a superbeing from the planet Neufelup. The thing is, the cap doesn't really do anything. He gets up, he meets up with his mates, he goes to the arcade "trawling for

sluts", but ultimately doesn't do much at all. Strangely, this is weirdly satisfying. Nothing really happened but I was sorry when it was over. (AS) 7

Frontiers 1-4

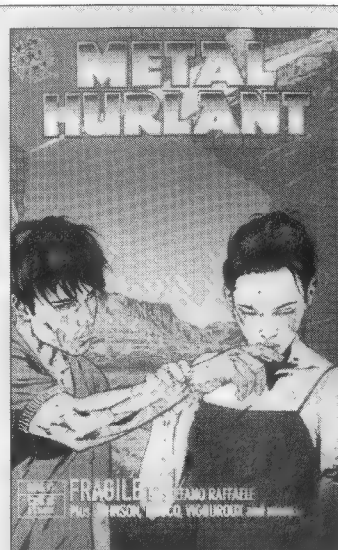
by McGee;
£1 each from T. McGee
143 Meldon Drive,
Bilston WV14 8BE

More sci-fi mysteries from Tony McGee. This is a much more confident work than the earlier *Angel Nebula*, although it has many thematic similarities to that series. The art is much better, with strong characterisation, and McGee's writing is on top form. Slow-moving, but in a good way, this is perceptibly building up to something exciting. (KG) 9

The Girly Comic 3/ Kiss Kiss Bang Bang 1

by various;
£2.50 from Factor Fiction
38 Clarkes Road, Wigston
Leicester LE18 2BE

<+> Lots to enjoy in this latest issue of the



Metal Hurlant 7

by various;
Humanoid Publishing

<+> Humanoid Publishing's US version of the classic European sci-fi anthology is a testament to the quality of work that is produced on the continent. The collection is held in place by the Freudian-inspired high-concept sci-fi of Alexandro Jodorowsky, whose serial *Megalex* is breathtakingly illustrated by Fred Beltran. This issue also includes Dan Curtis Johnson's psychic assassin in an *Outer Limits*-style twist assisted by Mark Vigouroux's action-strip artwork and the opening of Stefano Raffaele's 'life as a teenage zombie' *Fragile*. But with the talents of Francois Boucq and Herve Bourhis working on topographical rudeness

and colourful fantasies about impending fatherhood, the title proves to be a whole lot more than just the typical fantasy anthology. (MAT) 7

acclaimed anthology. All of the strips are of high quality in terms of art or writing, and in a number of cases, both. Dez Taylor's cool cop caper looks absolutely gorgeous, while the latest *Oddcases* story is both heartwarming and chilling at the same time. (KG) 8

Gone

by Auchterlounie;
There Goes Tokyo; £6.99

Janet is rescued from a mugging by Brent. They become involved but invariably it goes wrong. Janet then travels back through time in an attempt to make Brent's life better and consequently become a more loving person. Beautifully understated clever parable in a post-manga art style about nature versus nurture and the dangers of time travel. (TP) 8

Grey Sky 2

by Azzopardi & Watson; from
www.phatcatz.org.uk

A mini anthology utilising ink work, cut 'n' paste montages and digital design to great effect. Making the most of its black and white A5 format, this loosely horror-based comic has some really nice touches and manages to keep itself together despite the variety of material it contains. (AS) 7

One Step Beyond: Night & Day

by Sims & Zwirek + Kubkowski;
Kitty Litter Comics;
\$6.20 from M. Sims
4605 S. Wenonah Avenue, Forest
View, IL 60402, USA

The first story sees – with some difficulty due to the unclear artwork – rabbits with a vendetta. Things get moving in the second story when TJ sees mommy kissing Santa Clause. It also features the interesting idea of a DVD-like running commentary via text. As for the last two stories, I never read prose stories placed in comics: if that's what I wanted, I'd read a novel. Readable but requires extra graft. (CEB) 5

Pest Control 3

by Grant Springfield;
£1 from 2 Cawston Court
Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF

Intricate and involved superhero story, which may be daunting to first time readers. The recap of previous issues is confusing when you don't know the characters, but the comic itself is surprisingly accessible as it is divided into separate chapters. A well-written and interesting story, with consistent artwork and engaging panel arrangements. (LO) 7

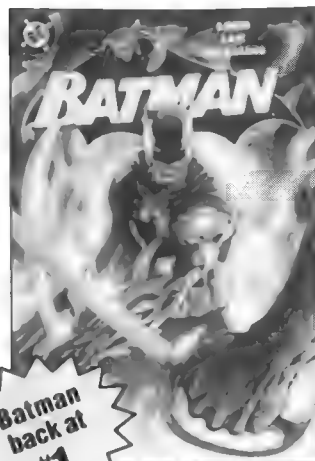
Red Fist

by Rivett; from
www.redfist.50g.com

A new title from the creator of *Butterguy* and *Sinmakers*. Rivett's work has become increasingly more hardcore over the years, and *Red Fist* is no exception. Essentially focusing on the late night antics of a predatory homosexual in a red PVC superhero costume, this is pretty extreme stuff. With artwork varying from excellent to, quite frankly, patchy and a plot that probably isn't to everyone's taste, this is best worth a preview on the website first. (AS) 6

Comics Economics

The Top 100 US comicbook sales for June 2003



Batman
back at
#1

Rank	Prior	Title	Issue	Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(2)	Batman	#616	\$2.25 (141,736)	DC Comics
2	(9)	Ultimate X-Men	#34	\$2.25 (110,753)	Marvel
3	(4)	Ultimate Spider-Man	#42	\$2.25 (100,151)	Marvel
4	(1)	Wolverine	#2	\$2.25 (99,867)	Marvel
5	(6)	New X-Men	#142	\$2.25 (97,897)	Marvel
6	(8)	Uncanny X-Men	#425	\$2.25 (91,547)	Marvel
7	(6)	Uncanny X-Men	#426	\$2.25 (89,719)	Marvel
8	(14)	Incredible Hulk	#56	\$2.25 (68,529)	Marvel
9	(11)	Transformers: Generation One Vol 2	#3	\$2.95 (67,211)	DreamWave
10	(=)	Venom	#2	\$2.25 (66,956)	Marvel/Tsunami



Ultimate
X-Men up to
#2

11 (N)	Spider-Man & Wolverine	#1	\$2.99 (66,729)	Marvel
12 (13)	X-treme X-Men	#27	\$2.99 (63,923)	Marvel
13 (N)	Born	#1	\$3.50 (63,554)	Marvel Knights
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000				
14 (15)	Daredevil	#48	\$2.99 (59,869)	Marvel Knights
15 (16)	JLA	#82	\$2.25 (58,480)	DC Comics
16 (17)	Avengers	#68	\$2.25 (57,587)	Marvel
17 (21)	Fantastic Four	#70	\$2.25 (53,066)	Marvel
18 (22)	Marvel Universe: The End	#6	\$2.99 (50,004)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000				
19 (23)	Peter Parker, Spider-Man	#57	\$2.25 (48,686)	Marvel
20 (N)	Outsiders	#1	\$2.50 (47,666)	DC Comics
21 (20)	Green Arrow	#27	\$2.50 (47,113)	DC Comics
22 (25)	Captain America	#14	\$2.99 (45,639)	Marvel Knights
23 (18)	New Mutants	#2	\$2.50 (45,568)	Marvel
24 (28)	JSA	#49	\$2.50 (43,740)	DC Comics
25 (29)	GI Joe	#18	\$2.95 (41,146)	Image
26 (N)	Kingpin	#1	\$2.50 (40,777)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000				
27 (N)	Batman/Superman/Wonder Woman: Trinity	#1	\$6.95 (39,870)	DC
28 (36)	The Punisher	#28	\$2.99 (39,431)	Marvel Knights
29 (41)	Exiles	#28	\$2.99 (39,048)	Marvel
30 (N)	Dark Days	#1	\$3.99 (38,751)	IDW Publishing
31 (N)	Planetary/Batman Night on Earth	#5	\$5.95 (38,666)	DC WildStorm
32 (29)	JSA All Stars	#2	\$2.50 (38,127)	DC Comics
33 (31)	Mystique	#3	\$2.99 (37,943)	Marvel/Tsunami
34 (30)	Wolverine: Snikt	#2	\$2.99 (37,631)	Marvel
35 (38)	Detective Comics	#783	\$2.75 (37,603)	DC Comics
36 (N)	Hulk: Nightmerica	#1	\$2.99 (37,347)	Marvel
37 (26)	The Authority Volume 2	#2	\$2.95 (37,092)	DC WildStorm
38 (33)	Transformers: Armada	#12	\$2.95 (36,908)	DreamWave
39 (=)	Green Lantern	#166	\$2.25 (35,973)	DC Comics
40 (49)	Titans/Young Justice: Graduation Day	#3	\$2.50 (35,774)	DC Comics
41 (47)	X-Men Unlimited	#48	\$2.50 (34,314)	Marvel
42 (N)	Thundercats: Dogs of War	#1	\$2.95 (34,130)	DC WildStorm
43 (34)	Truth: Red, White & Black	#6	\$3.50 (33,875)	Marvel
44 (45)	Thundercats Return	#5	\$2.95 (33,662)	DC WildStorm
45 (46)	Superman	#194	\$2.25 (33,563)	DC Comics
46 (48)	Thor	#65	\$2.99 (33,450)	Marvel
47 (43)	Astro City: Local Heroes	#3	\$2.95 (33,180)	DC/Homage
48 (42)	Superman: Red Son	#2	\$5.95 (32,698)	DC Comics
49 (56)	Flash	#199	\$2.25 (32,458)	DC Comics
50 (N)	TMNTurtles Animated	#1	\$2.95 (32,273)	DreamWave
51 (=)	Iron Man	#69	\$2.99 (31,976)	Marvel
52 (N)	Hulk Movie Adaptation	\$3.50	(31,891)	Marvel
53 (54)	Action Comics	#804	\$2.25 (31,494)	DC Comics
54 (50)	Aquaman	#7	\$2.50 (30,615)	DC Comics

55 (57)	Batgirl: Year One	#7	\$2.95 (30,289)	DC Comics
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000				
56 (61)	Batgirl	#41	\$2.50 (29,694)	DC Comics
57 (64)	Nightwing	#82	\$2.25 (29,552)	DC Comics
58 (65)	Hawkman	#16	\$2.50 (29,481)	DC Comics
59 (63)	Batman: Gotham Knights	#42	\$2.75 (29,410)	DC Comics
60 (66)	Adventures of Superman	#617	\$2.25 (29,183)	DC Comics
61 (37)	Inhumans	#2	\$2.50 (28,645)	Marvel
62 (43)	Namor	#3	\$2.25 (28,503)	Marvel/Tsunami
63 (70)	Captain Marvel	#11	\$2.99 (28,021)	Marvel
64 (53)	Arkham Asylum: Living Hell	#2	\$2.50 (27,851)	DC Comics
65 (75)	Paradise X	#11	\$2.99 (27,639)	Marvel
66 (75)	Alias	#23	\$2.99 (27,426)	Marvel/MAX Comics
67 (60)	Wolverine Doop	#2	\$2.99 (27,398)	Marvel
68 (N)	Lobo Unbound	#1	\$2.95 (27,327)	DC Comics
69 (72)	X-Men Ronin	#5	\$2.99 (26,859)	Marvel
70 (71)	JLA: Scary Monsters	#4	\$2.50 (26,831)	DC Comics
71 (N)	Magdalena/Vampirella	\$2.99	(26,831)	Image Harris
72 (91)	Birds of Prey	#56	\$2.50 (26,802)	DC Comics
73 (79)	Powers	#32	\$2.95 (26,774)	Image
74 (76)	Superman/Batman Generations III	#6	\$2.95 (26,604)	DC Comics
75 (68)	The Darkness Volume 2	#4	\$2.99 (26,561)	Image Top Cow
76 (77)	Elektra	#24	\$2.99 (26,023)	Marvel Knights
77 (82)	Batman Legends/Dark Knight	#168	\$2.50 (26,009)	DC Comics
78 (80)	Y: The Last Man	#12	\$2.95 (25,966)	DC Vertigo
79 (78)	Agent X	#11	\$2.99 (25,824)	Marvel
80 (81)	Wonder Woman	#193	\$2.25 (25,598)	DC Comics
81 (59)	Human Torch	#3	\$2.50 (25,286)	Marvel/Tsunami
82 (68)	Domino	#2	\$2.50 (25,272)	Marvel
83 (=)	Fables	#14	\$2.50 (25,229)	DC Vertigo
84 (N)	The Eternal	#1	\$2.99 (25,172)	Marvel/MAX Comics
85 (79)	Agent X	#12	\$2.99 (24,350)	Marvel
86 (N)	Terra Obscura	#1	\$2.95 (23,443)	DC ABC
87 (93)	Spider-Girl	#61	\$2.99 (23,429)	Marvel
88 (87)	Catwoman	#20	\$2.50 (23,231)	DC Comics
89 (74)	Sentinel	#3	\$2.50 (23,174)	Marvel
90 (73)	Voltron: Defender of the Universe	#2	\$2.95 (22,975)	Image
91 (N)	War Machine 2.0	#1	\$2.99 (22,947)	Marvel/MAX Comics
92 (=)	Legion	#21	\$2.50 (22,749)	DC Comics
93 (N)	Robotech: Love & War	#1	\$2.95 (22,706)	DC Comics
94 (=)	Sojourn	#24	\$2.95 (22,678)	CrossGen
95 (97)	Robin	#115	\$2.25 (22,054)	DC Comics
96 (95)	Witchblade	#65	\$2.99 (21,941)	Image Top Cow
97 (62)	Crew	#2	\$2.50 (21,615)	Marvel
98 (91)	War Machine 2.0	#2	\$2.99 (21,402)	Marvel
99 (96)	Tomb Raider	#31	\$2.99 (21,317)	Image Top Cow
100 (96)	Witchblade	#66	\$2.99 (20,835)	Image Top Cow

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Black Knight

Tony Ingram
3 Lower Harlings
Shotley Gate, Ipswich IP9 1QE

I WAS wondering if anyone knew if the classic Steve Parkhouse/John Stokes *Black Knight* strip from Marvel UK's *Hulk Comic* (1979-'80) has ever been reprinted or is likely to be in the near future.

I recently set myself the (some would say sad) task of at last completing my collection of "original" (pre-*Excalibur*) appearances of the much maligned and vastly underrated Captain Britain and those *Hulk Comic* appearances in the *Black Knight* strip have proven surprisingly hard to find. In fact, the two dozen issues I've been unable to locate are now the only UK Captain Britain material I don't have, which is somewhat irritating since that 63-part epic is probably one of the best tales ever to come out of Marvel UK – and Marvel UK

did produce a lot of good stuff in its heyday.

Perhaps someone should recommend to Marvel's collections editor that a look at their defunct sister company's archives might not be a bad idea?

I've tried, I've tried. I even mentioned it to Joe Quesada the last time I saw him, but they don't seem interested. Hope you also got the first Captain Britain Summer Special, Tony. We ran some great background features on the strip in there. ...Dez

Blitz Boy

Tim Trounce via e-mail:
tim.trounce@ntlworld.com

CAN anybody give me any info on a character by the name of Blitz Boy, I remember him from comics I read in the Sixties. Any info would be great.

Over to our readers on this one in this month's sadly truncated column. New features, pah! What about a bit more respect for the old ones?

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions

Billy the Cat query, Q&A #160

Phil Hampton via e-mail: phil@pah1507.freemove.co.uk

ALTHOUGH *Billy the Cat* ran in *The Beano* in the '60s/'70s, the actual early-'80s comic that Stuart Thomas was referring to was *Buddy*. I don't know whether the *Billy the Cat* strip was just reprints from *The Beano* or not. *Buddy*, along with its companion comic *Spike*, introduced such great characters as Limp-Along Leslie, a young footballer with a crippled leg who could kick the ball into the corner of the net with one of his famous 'Banana-benders' (hmm...), and Iron Barr, a goalie with a beer-gut who, despite leaping the wrong way after a penalty kick, could still manage to save the ball by twisting his whole body in mid-air!

I think *Spike* was later merged with *Buddy*, which was then merged into *Valiant*. [Doubt that last bit, Phil. *Valiant* was from a different publisher!] The best strip in *Buddy*, after *Billy the Cat*, was *The Man in Black* – a mysterious individual who looked like The Punisher and managed to break new records at the Olympics despite being about 50 years older than he actually looked, and no-one knowing who he was! If anyone can remember how he gained his super speed, strength and long life, it would be greatly appreciated. The only thing I can remember about his origin was when he ran through fields with horses in a thunderstorm, trying to be at one with nature.

Rom Space Knight checklist update

Leigh Hunt via e-mail

WITH regards to your Rom checklist in Q&A #157, I am a bit baffled. Most of the entries seem just plain wrong or they are just one panel flashbacks (usually in relation to Rick Jones's memories). I would have thought your reader would be more interested in Rom's genuine appearances in other books such as *Power Man & Iron Fist* 73, *Contest of Champions* 1, *Marvel Two in One* 99, *Hulk* 296, *Hulk* 418, and (kind of) *Spaceknights* 1.

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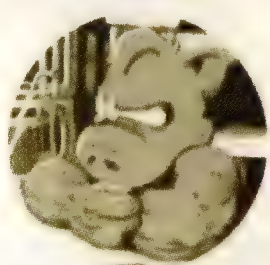
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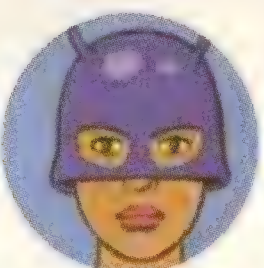
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WHILE THE UK supply of post-adolescent comics has dwindled to a mere handful, by contrast the indie and small press market has mushroomed. So, in addition to CI's classified announcements and small press reviews sections, *Panel Beaters* gives readers a chance to sample some of the best of what's out there.

Each of the following strips is meant to be a stand-alone tale or gag that has been produced as an exclusive taster for CI

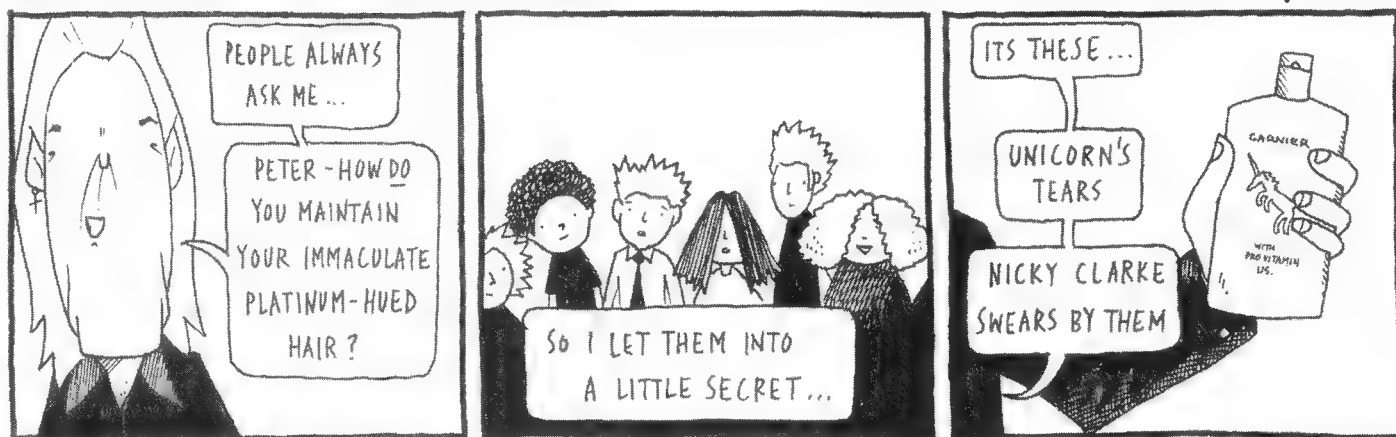
readers, and is accompanied with full details about where to find more of the creator's work.

Would-be contributors to this section for future issues should email editorial@comicsinternational.com requesting a Panel Beaters style sheet, or write to us at *Panel Beaters, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ*.

Compiled by Leonie O'Moore & Andy Smith

THE RISE AND FALL OF TREVOR MELBURY

written and drawn by Adam Davidson



THE RISE AND FALL OF TREVOR MELBURY is currently available for £1.00 from Smallzone.

Write to them at: 10 Cleveland Ave., High Ercall, Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH

CLEANSING SERVICES: Special Ops

by Neill Cameron



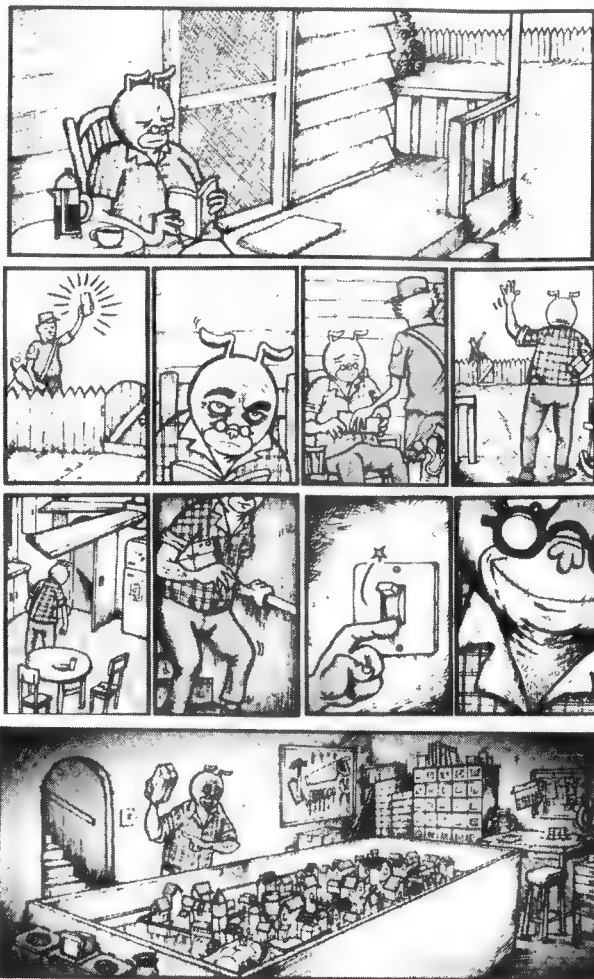
Issues 2 and 3 currently available at £1.50 each or £2.50 for the pair.

Write to: Neill Cameron, 70 Godstow Road, Wolvercote, Oxford OX2 8NY (www.planetdumbass.co.uk)

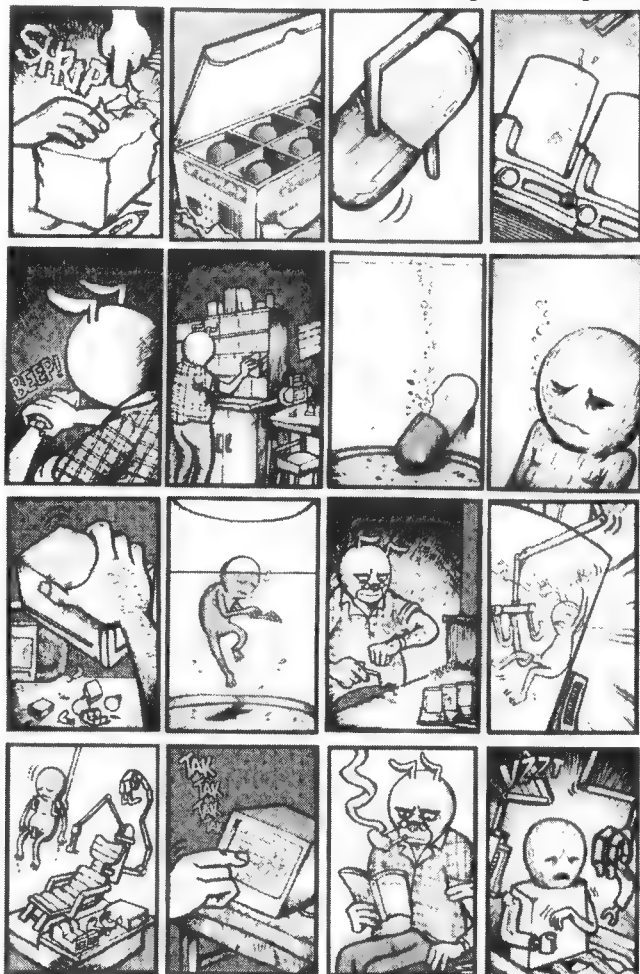
MR. AMPERDUKE Part 1

PART 1
BY BOB BYRNE

MR. AMPERDUKE



written and drawn by Bob Byrne



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SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

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OPENS MIDDAY

Letters

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Birchill bashing

Sandra and John,
Metaphrog via e-mail:
metaphrog@metaphrog.com

JULIE Birchill recently wrote a piece for *The Guardian* on comics praising our *Louis* books but attacking *Warburger* and questioning the ability of comics to tackle serious subjects as well as calling an image of ours of Bush and Blair the work of homophobes!

You may wish to check it out at:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,3605,1026420,00.html>

I'm back!

Mark Newbold via e-mail

I FELT I had to write in, given my imminent return to comics collecting. I was a Marvel freak for many years through the '80s, and got into DC when John Byrne, Alan Moore et al did their number on the DC Universe. I got into a few indies, Vertigo, licensed stuff and managed to collect more than 5,000 comics.

Then I felt let down by the *Spider Clone* saga in '95, and the *Age of Apocalypse*, so the Marvels stopped. Then DC got greedy with Batman and Supes, so those titles went. All that was left was

Preacher (God, I miss that comic sooo much. First *Star Trek DS9*, then that, and now *Buffy*), plus **Groo**, **Sin City** and **Star Wars**.

Then the usual happened: I bought a house, and so different bills and priorities came into play. But after visiting Memorabilia at the NEC and buying, on the recommendation of a dealer, six issues of **Y: The Last Man** I'm all eager again.

But what really made me decide to restart collecting was reading

through *CI*. It's not changed much in the two years since I last read it, which made it comforting and easy to read, and seeing familiar panelists' names, artists and writers gave me a thrill. I feel like I've missed out on a lot, and I really want to get back into it.

Thanks, *CI*, for making me decide to delve back into this great hobby again, and you'll be hearing from me very soon to place a subscription.

Rude customers 2

Kerry Earl via e-mail:
kerry@americancomicshop.fsnet.co.uk

IN RESPONSE to 'Ten Things I Hate about You...' (*Comment, CI #162*), the comment by a comics shop employee on rude customers...

I'd like to throw in 10 more timeless questions all get asked each and every week:

- 1) "What time will the delivery turn up, and what will be in it for me?" (I'll just ring the TNT driver and ask him!)
- 2) "Do you do tattoos?" (No, we're a comics shop!)
- 3) "Do you do fancy dress?" (No, we're a comics shop!)
- 4) "Do you sell flags/batteries/cowboy hats/dolphin posters/headphones/AOL discs/cold drinks and could I have £30 worth of £1 coins?" (No! We're a bloody comic shop!)

OK, so I don't get asked for these weekly, but I have been asked for all of the above.

- 5) "I've got this comic at home. It's old; I've no idea what it's called. Is it worth anything?" (Not if you've read it.)
- 6) [Pointing to the comics] "How much are these PlayStation games?" (£40)
- 7) "If I buy this comic now, what will it be worth in the future?" (Oh, that one? That'll be £123.56p.)
- 8) "Have you got that comic, don't

know what it's called, where [add hero] runs off and fights [add villain]? You know the one!" (Yes, multiple copies.)

9) "What's the best comic you've got?" (That one in the 50p box.)

10) "Are you open?" (No. We often come into the shop, unlock the doors and try the lights out.)

And general comments like...

"Oh, they've got a Superman/Spider-Man/Batman [take your pick] comic out now!" (Yeah, they'll cash in on a movie pretty quickly nowadays!)

"I've got Batman/Superman/Spider-Man #1 indoors!" ('Course you have.)

"Do you actually like comics?" (No. I'm only here until I'm discovered by a film company.)

Boy, I love my job!

The customer strikes back

Steve Page, Ealing

IN RESPONSE to the anonymous comic shop employee (*Comment, #162*): the following is based on my experiences as someone who has come back to comics after a 20-year break and has been visiting comics shops around London and the south east for a little under three and a half years now.

If nothing that is said here applies to you, congratulations, you are a valued comics shop assistant/manager/owner.

If you do recognise yourself here, as Aunt Petunia would say, "If you've never been clobbered before, maybe it was just a matter of time!"

- 1) If you insist on arranging your stock by publisher instead of by title, author or genre, you must expect that we punters will approach you and ask directions. Please don't look at me like I'm akin to a dog turd on your shoe or a remedial school kid.
- 2) Opening shelf copies for a look before we buy is part and parcel of what we customers do. So why not cater for us by making some space between the shelves for browsing and standing room?
- 3) Accept that the competition bags its comicbooks. If a punter asks for a

bag... (see dogturd comment above).

4) Just 'cos I'm not a regular customer and you don't know my name doesn't entitle you to ignore me in preference to your pal who's just walked in.

5) Can you please phone Bill another time to arrange where you're meeting after work; not when I'm standing in front of the counter with my comics selection in hand waiting to pay.

6) Turn it down! Not everyone likes your taste in music; heavy rock and X-fm can make it hard to browse for more than a few minutes.

7) I'm not a midget or overly used to crawling around limited floor space to see what's on your bottom two shelves. Please rearrange your shelving to allow us to at least read the titles without scuffing our trousers.

8) Take plastic without a gripe. It's the 21st century, after all.

9) It isn't an honour to visit your private comicbook collection; you are a shop and I am a shopper. So let me open a bag before I buy. If you want to open it for me because it's a two-year old X-Men Movie Adaptation comic-book, be my guest. But don't question my wish to look at the artwork before I buy.

10) If you don't like kids in your shop put a sign on the door. I won't tell them off for being excited at being in your shop. I want to encourage that excitement, not dampen it.

11) If I have to try your door handle to work out if you are open, you need to rethink your interior lighting.

12) Not every punter reads *CI*. If we ask something basic, be patient – and maybe tactfully sell us a copy.

Personally, I shop at Comicana, Central London. The staff are helpful and Alex doesn't treat me like I'm a moron – even when I show my ignorance for being out of circulation for so long.

Now, if only he could sort out that shelving...

Taking up the defense

Billy Hynes
Another Comics Shop Employee,
Central London

REGARDING last issue's *Comment*, from one central London retailer to another: a simple "lighten up" should be enough of a response

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS



Script by Paul Kristian

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

about your pithy, if not pissy, diatribe about the peccadilloes of your patrons in purgatory.

As it is, I feel the need to respond fully, as I know some of my customers think I wrote said anonymous Kevin Smith-themed rant.

A number of the points you listed come down to common courtesy and are far from exclusive to comic stores. Loud personal stereotypes, "put it back where you found it," "don't talk on your phone..." and permanent browsers are facts of general retail and/or London living. When people flaunt these basic unwritten rules of living, tell 'em. It'll certainly cut down on your stress levels.

You either supply comic bags or you don't. Pretty straightforward, really. It's not doing customers a favour, it's part of the service your boss offers.

Creating an environment where those distracted fan spouses don't feel so uncomfortable is certainly worth a try. They may feel frustrated at how long it's taking to serve their spouse while explaining, to "the fullest extent of [your] abilities" whatever you consider to be important that day. I know comic shop staff!

Addressing your first and last points, you should be able to relate to the enthusiasm and frustration felt by fans (read 'fanatics') at the delays suffered by big books from big creators. It can get tedious answering the same questions constantly, but you work in a comics shop at a time when these delays are rife and there are serious amounts of good books for people to look forward to in all genres.

I personally find working in a comics shop to be a mixed bag (the money's terrible!) and I'm sure I've voiced similar opinions as you in the past, although I feel there's a time and a place. You may find you make your customers paranoid as to whether they're on your \$#!+ list by so vocally, and frankly unprofessionally, belittling them.

Having returned to comic retail from a "real job" sabbatical I'm aware that there are *much* worse places to be. Enjoy the fact it's not the early Nineties (no matter how hard Marvel tries to emulate them!). Remember why you work where you do and not in some Visigoth hypermarket and relax...

Alternatively, go work at Page 45. It sounds euphoric and beautiful!

When Retailers Clash

Eke Webb

302 Hughenden Road
High Wycombe, Bucks HP13 5PF
WELL, that was a lovely juxtaposition of two views from comics retailers (Stephen Holland's *Talking Shop* and the "Comic Shop Employee" in *Comment*) in #162. Was it intentional?

A little unfortunate for the latter; in any other issue his (definitely a he I think, don't you?) comments might conceivably have appeared slightly amusing but set against Holland's beautiful paen to retailing they looked distinctly

mean and small-minded.

I only hope that *Talking Shop* ends up changing a few peoples' minds about what comics shopping could and should be like.

Ecrire avec son pied

Phil Tonge,
Flat 3, 1 Willoughby Avenue,
Lenton, Nottingham NG7 2EP

A REPLY to Stephen Holland's *Having the Best Job in the World* feature (*Shop Talk*, CI #162).

"Please let me introduce myself, I'm a man of Who and contempt." Yes, I'm the sad bloke crucified in Mr Holland's opus, here to put a few things straight.

First off, I worked for 13 years in comics retail, 12 of those for Forbidden Planet, Nottingham. In that time I prided myself on working hard to provide a decent level of customer service. That was for everyone who walked in the front door. Sure, like every shop worker I had the odd off-day, but not as a matter of course.

Steve may be confusing me with my oppo, the legendary Mike Pearce. I worked under Mike for 10 years – a man I secretly admired for his Olympian rudeness to customers. People came from miles around just to witness him in action.

Of course, Mike still works in the industry, for Another World – in fact sometimes in the branch next door to Holland's Page 45. I surmise that it was easier for Holland to slag off a 'civilian' rather than a man who only has to walk a few feet to punch him.

I'm also accused of being "notorious for slagging off comics (I) didn't like when readers presented them to (me) at the counter." That's bollocks. Also, that's a bit rich when I recall the ritual eye-rolling, tutting and groaning from Page 45 staffers when I'd buy a comic they didn't like (e.g. *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*). In fact, I had quite a few customers set up standing orders with our shop because they didn't feel comfortable with the snotty attitude they encountered at Page 45.

Yes, when I got the boot from FP (customer service, yes; time-keeping and sobriety, no), I did set up a standing order with Page 45. However, it wasn't only for *Doctor Who Magazine* as Mr Holland states. It also included *Eightball*, *Love & Rockets*, *Hopeless Savages*, Peter Bagge and Bob Fingerman stuff, etc. I did pick them up too, by the way. I remember being very grateful that they'd tracked down a copy of the *Fifth Doctor Special*. OK, I upped and left my standing order (and Nottingham) without cancelling it, which was out of order. Being dole scum, I went chasing work down south.

When I came back to Nottingham, I remember apologising to Mr Holland himself.

As for the crack about "He never seemed happy", well that's hilarious coming from a man who makes Ian Curtis look like Max Miller.

As a matter of public record, I'd like to point out that in 1991 the customer base of FP Nottingham (which actively recruited female workers) was 30% female. Plus 20% of all customers were Afro-Caribbean, 8% were of Hong Kong Chinese origin, and 80% were working class. 1991 was before Page 45 even existed.

However, it is an interesting project in comics retail and Bon Chance to it. However, if Mr Holland wishes to continue tilting at windmills, then he really should: a) stop telling fibs to make a point. b) if carrying out personal attacks, have the moral courage to name names, or veil the attacks so that I (or anyone else) don't get phone calls like, "Hey Phil, CI is slagging you off." (c) have a hypocrisy test.

If not, he leaves himself open to the charge of being a smug supercilious prat. Which, of course, he isn't.

Anyway, my comic crusading days are over. These days I just draw them (which reminds me, *Killer Komix* #2 is still available from www.head-press.com).

Beryl the Peril

Lew Stringer via e-mail

REGARDING David Robinson's query about the *Beryl the Peril* strips in *The Funday Times* (*Letters*, #162); yes, they are indeed reprints. The FT originally reprinted the Davy Law strips, but now they've moved on to the ones by Law's successor, John Dallas.

The comic supplement has always featured many reprints from its inception; a strange mixture of stuff from DC Thomson, Herge's *Tin Tin*, and, last time I looked, re-edited *Scooby Doo* strips from DC Comics. The amount of new strip material is now less than one page I believe.

As for Beryl's modern look in the weekly *Dandy* comic, the "Nipponese-influenced" art (as Robinson put it) is the work of long-established cartoonist Dixon, who has a looser ink style because of his background in gag cartoons rather than any manga influences.

The *Dandy* is currently breaking away from its traditional roots a little and trying new styles. Kids have a wider exposure to different cartoon styles on TV and in video games now, and the comic is attempting to reflect this.

Malice aforethought

Bryan Talbot via e-mail

THOUGHT I'd reply to Dave Lloyd's letter in the last CI. He writes: "I want to contest the report last issue that *Nightjar* would have been Alan Moore's first published horror story". He then goes on to say that, in his opinion, a strip he did with Alan for *Dr Who Weekly* was his first horror strip.

I've not seen the strip in question, which is presumably set in the future, but Dave's description of disembodied alien brains, *Terminator*-style robots and killer dolls places it very firmly in the genre of science fiction and, as

he admits, pulp sci-fi at that, even published in a sci-fi zine.

What Alan was attempting in *Nightjar* was a serious reinvention of the horror strip, replacing the then standard superhero magicians and arcane wizards with contemporary state of the art horror fiction. The work of writers such as Stephen King, Peter Strawb and, especially, Ramsey Campbell, whose skilful tales of terrifying weirdness set in everyday urban North of England locations, provided the literary influences on the strip.

Nightjar's premise of a working class urban sorcerer eventually manifested itself in the character of John Constantine.

Oh, and while I'm here, thanks to David Robinson for pointing out that The Shadows did an instrumental in the '60s with the same title as my new project, *Alice in Sunderland*, though I'd already been told about it and have even tracked down a copy (and it's naff).

Meanwhile there are plans to film a movie here this year, starring Ozzy Osbourne's daughter(!) called *Malice in Sunderland*.

Now everybody will think I pinched the title from them.

Letter to the Editor

Christopher Atkins via e-mail

CI #162 was a fabulous issue. Nice quality paper, some fresh ideas and great news – especially about Pete Nash's *Striker* launch.

The original *Sun* strip itself was never totally my cup of tea, but Nash clearly displayed craftsmanship and storytelling that, for me at least, rekindled memories of *Tiger* and *Roy of the Rovers*. I used to quite enjoy those uniquely British titles, though admittedly the cancellation of such periodicals did pass me by.

It's good to hear a pro like Nash is as peeved as the rest of us about the state of the industry and is taking action to address it. I join you in wishing him the best of British.

Panel Beaters was rather splendid. I wasn't convinced about the 'Sunday Section' format, but having seen the first one I'm glad you followed through. A thought struck me as I read it. Could it be that Dez is searching for talent with a view to launching a possible successor to *Warrior*? I say successor, as I recall Dez writing about not being one to revisit old triumphs, but I firmly believe that Britain needs a quality (pun unintentional) comics anthology and it's safe to say that the bulk of CI readers have a lot of faith in Dez.

So is there anything on the horizon?

Maybe, but not as you imagine. ... Dez

In the net

Mike Allwood, Area 51, Bristol

JUST had to write to say I got my copy of *Striker* tonight, not bad. With its computer pin-up on the back cover they're covering all angles in this comic.

Gotta go now and get it slabbed and put up on eBay.

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel	.....	www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams	.....	www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker	.....	www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale	.....	www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art	.....	www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright	.....	www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell	.....	www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday	.....	www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan	.....	www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon	.....	www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner	.....	www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis	.....	www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio	.....	www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward	.....	www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones	.....	www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton	.....	www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner	.....	www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle	.....	www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud	.....	www.scottmccloud.com
Grant Morrison	.....	www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art	.....	www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens	.....	www.davestevens.com
William Stout	.....	www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot	.....	www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith	.....	www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson	.....	www.berniwrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios	.....	www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics	.....	www.accomics.com
Acclaim	.....	www.acclaim.com/comics
AIT/Planet Lar	.....	www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press	.....	www.antarctic-press.com
Archie Comic Publications	.....	www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics	.....	www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books	.....	www.boneville.com
Chaos!	.....	www.chaoscomics.com
Cool Beans World	.....	www.coolbeansworld.com
Com.X	.....	www.comxcomics.com
CrossGeneration Comics	.....	www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment	.....	www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse	.....	www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics	.....	www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly	.....	www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces	.....	www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics	.....	www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics	.....	www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal	.....	www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics	.....	www.knockabout.com

Marvel Comics	.....	www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz	.....	www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press	.....	www.onipress.com
Quality/Warrior	.....	www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment	.....	www.sirius.choiceonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions	.....	www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics	.....	www.topcow.com
TwoMorrrows	.....	www.twomorrrows.com
2000 AD	.....	www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA)		www.viz.com
Viz (UK)		www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics		www.wildstorm.com

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Festivals and fairs

Amadora Comics Festival..... www.bdamadora.com
Angouleme BD (France) www.bdagouleme.com
Comic-Con International (San Diego, USA)
..... www.comic-con.org
Lucca Comics (Italy) www.comune.lucca.it
Megacon (Florida, USA) .. www.megaconvention.com

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.....**www.memorabilia.co.uk**

Raptus International Comics Festival (Norway)
..... www.raptus.no
Scottish Comic, Card & Collectables Fair
.....e-mail:marts@redhotcomics.demon.co.uk
Wizard World (Chicago, USA) www.wizarduniverse.com

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics	.....	www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics		www.avaloncomics.co.uk
Black Dog Comics		www.blackdog-comics.com

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www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet		www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk
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On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, CI now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US \$8) a month. Bookable in 6-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US \$40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per 6-issue series, US \$60 (£10/\$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to: Internet Listings, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: Listings@comicsinternational.com

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines

ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc
Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 71-75 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG. Mon-Wed/Sat 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi, fantasy, books, video, games, mags, kits, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Sun 10-6; (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 020 8770 3815

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6; (Thurs-Fri to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat

10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers)

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Fri 10-6; (Thurs to 7); Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Into the Void, 262 Streatham High Road, Streatham SW16 1HS. Mon-Sat 9.30-7; Sun 11-3. (imp, back, STO, merch, toys) 020 8677 7037

Krypton Comics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Mon-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6. Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics 2, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs/Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10.30-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 783879

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comics Unlimited, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Herts. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (closed Wed) (imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, videos, Games W/shop) 01462 480018

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6

(imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Into the Void, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Into the Void, 61 Lower Ground Floor, Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Essex RM20 1WT. Mon-Fri 10-10; Sat 9-7.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, prl, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, art, statues) 01708 862675

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Pat's Comics & Collectables, 7 Suttons Lane, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6RD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch, trading cards) 01708 459444

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch) 01843 224768

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand computer games) 01753 521594

Speeding Bullet Comics, 43 Hermitage Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1BY. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Wed 10-5); Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, STO, CCG, action figures, original artwork, life-size Spidey mannequin for hire) 01462 451117

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Another World, 42/43 Main Centre (opposite Wilkinsons) Derby. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, computer games) 01332 206606

Another World, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162515266

Another World, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Fri 9-5.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

Another World, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381 Mail Order: 271750

Another World, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 024 76229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 6430143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi/horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-

5.30; Sun 12-5 (2 floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Wed closed; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Moonwalk Collectables, Unit 15, Climax Works, Durham Street (off Station Road), North Redditch SK5 6YZ. Mon-Sat 10-6 (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, merch, Star Wars and Dr Who specialist, TV/film, British titles) 0161 431 6050

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool FY4 1DW. Mon, Tues, Thurs-Sat (Sun June-Oct inc) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Fri 10-7) (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7) (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 014256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30

(imp., back, STO, ind, CCG, merch)
01912512288

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Wed closed) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek) 01142758905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01132427227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904628787

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225424881

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 01179244655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5, (Wed closed), Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452410232

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 01179298692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 02380230991
fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed) Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 02392422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch) 01793434363

Kaboom, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import computer games, mail order) 01803863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01179221170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202661346

Purple Haze, 38 Eastlake Walk, Drakes Circus Shopping Centre, Plymouth, Devon PL1 1BX. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film, TV, sci-fi/horror/genre books, videos, Star Trek/Wars, cassettes/CDs) 01752254136

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth BH1

4BE. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202394918
or 393613

Wales

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 02920658184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi/fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 02920228885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 11 years) 01633222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Mon and Thurs to 8); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 01415522208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thurs until 7); Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30, Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 Sun 12-5 (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 01315588226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30, Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01413311215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling, Fife FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Road). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 01414241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Thurs to 6), Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWW, merch, sci-fi) 01224624467
tel/fax

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Sat 11.30-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01416300049

Northern Ireland

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 02890438744

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)12059332787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00)19072744112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Blvd, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) t/f: (00)19073443963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Blvd, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) t/f: (00)19076965166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) t/f: (00)16192780371

California

ComicKaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Blvd, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch) (00)18582780371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)14158639258 (f: 9299)

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)15108255410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)16509651800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9. (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)16505711489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)13238517223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Ave, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) t/f: (00)15105253344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Blvd, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri-Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)13107916227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Wai'alae Ave, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)18087321292 (f: 2188)

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)17735452231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thurs 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)15042860039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)15042860039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak St, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)15048651800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)12077801676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch) (00)12078920056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk) (00)16172664266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)16516993409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thurs-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)15184655495

Forbidden Planet (FPI) associate, 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)12124731576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)12122687088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)17183516299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)12123028192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)16142676473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)19183353373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)17173228763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Blvd, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)16103768255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)16109213160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro TN 37130. Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)16158951120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)16158951120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922. Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)12036756830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch) (00)16153858136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)18179277172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)19567918428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)15124542399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Blvd, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, MtTG, cards, vinyl) (00)18044589561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)17575872540 (f: 5637)

Wisconsin

Arcade Comics Entertainment, PO Box 301, Germantown, WI 53022. (new, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (00)12622539003 (f: 6958226)

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)14143284651 (f: 328-1355)

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US \$10) a month! Bookable in 6-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US \$60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Retail Index, Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ, England

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(1144) 1273566333 or e-mail: Listings@comicsinternational.com

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch) (0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Taminés, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STG, toys) (0032) 2 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (001) 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (001) 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (001) 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (001) 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat

10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG) (0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STG) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STG, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STG, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STG, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forlì. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jaling Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasília, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasília, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euronag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicluden Strassburgstr., 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 241 9695 fax 1 2403442

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

September 12-14: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, PO Box 768, Central 5807 Bergen, Norway. Tel/fax: 0047 55 32 88 55. E-mail: awa@hib.no Website: www.raptus.no

September 20-21: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. Contact: Marc Nathan. Tel: 001 410 526 7410. E-mail: cardscomicscollectibles@yahoo.com

September 27-28: Finland

THE 18TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. Tel/fax: 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu

October 11-12: Belgium

FACTS 2003, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Taminés, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: 0032 2 534 63 67 fax 0032 2 538 24 52. Website: www.facts-convention.com

October 24-26: Poland

THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMICS. Organisers: Lodzki Dom Kultury, Traugutta 18, 90-113 Lodz, Poland. Tel: 0042 633 98 00 ext 244 or 247. E-mail: festiwalkomiksu@poczta.wp.pl

October 18-November 3: Portugal

BD-AMADORA '03. Organisers: Festival Internacional de Banda Desenhada da Amadora, av do Brasil 52-A, 2700-134 Amadora. Tel: 00351 21 499 8910 fax: 00351 21 496 2353. E-mail: bd.amadora@mail.telepac.pt Website: www.bdamadora.com

October 31-November 2: Italy

LUCCA COMICS. Organisers: Lucca Comics, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. Tel: 0039 583 48522 fax: 0039 583 91203.

November 1: England

COMIC FESTIVAL LONDON. Organisers: Comic Festival, PO Box 48, Clevedon, Bristol BS21 7LQ. Website: www.comicfestival.co.uk

November 29-30: England

MEMORABILIA '03, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk

January: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinée, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angoulême, France. Tel: 0033 05 45 97 86 50 fax: 0033 05 45 95 99 28. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com Website: www.labd.com Date: TBA

March 5-7: United States

MEGA CON 2004, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers: MegaCon, 4023 Tampa Road - Suite 2400, Oldsmar, Florida 34677, USA. Tel: 001 813 891 1702. E-mail: info@megaconvention.com Website: www.megaconvention.com

April: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

May 21-23: Finland

ARCTIC COMICS FESTIVAL, KEMI. Organisers: The Arctic Comics Centre, Rautatienkatu 13 B, FIN-90100 Oulu, Finland. Tel/fax: 00358 400 514 540. E-mail: ilpo.koskela@graafinenstudio.com Website: www.kemi.fi/sarjis

The letters (FPI) after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensely, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact phone numbers are given where readily available.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint, dormant)
(00)1 516 656 5000

AIT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels)
(00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative and graphic novels)
(00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC., 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked)
(00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach, Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour)
(00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, Illinois, IL 61802 (horror fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2211

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, PO Box 6191,

Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles)
(00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH 43216 (Bone and related)

CROSSGENERATION COMICS, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy adventure) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD., PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure)
(00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukee, OR 97222 (adventure titles, licensed, US and Japanese manga)
(00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DISNEY COMICS, 500 South Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91521 (humour titles)
(00)1 818 507 5739

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4S8 (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 2750 14th Avenue, Suite 302, Markham, Ontario L3R 0B6, Canada

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult)
(00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror)
(00)1 212 807 7100

HARVEY COMICS ENTERTAINMENTS, 100 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 91401 (humour)
(00)1 310 451 3377

HEAVY METAL, 100 Merrick Road, Suite 400 East, The Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)
(00)1 516 594 2130

HUMANIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)
(00)1 714 2880200

IMAGE COMICS, 1440 North Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92835 (adventure)
(00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed)
(00)1 212 696 0808

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukee Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure)
(00)1 503 233 1377

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB 117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga)
(00)1 210 348 7195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC., PO Box 128, Stanhope, NJ 07874 (adult)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 848 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126 (black and white fantasy) (00)1 408 279 0451

TOP COW, 10390 Santa Monica Boulevard #110, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (adventure and licensed)

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical)
(00)1 770 425 0551

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 1812 Park Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina, NC 27605 (comics feature magazines) (00)1 919 833 8092

VEROTIK PRESS, PO Box 64859, Los Angeles, CA 07043 (adult fantasies)

VIZ COMICS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 43 Haight Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-offs)
(00)1 914 473 9277

WILDSTORM, 7910 Ivanhoe Street, #438 La Jolla, CA 92037 (includes ABC, Cliffhanger and Homage DC subsidiary imprints)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK newsstand comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

DC THOMSON, Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure comics, pocket books and annuals)

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (humour, licensed and pre-school titles)
020 7344 6400

HAMLIN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (2000 AD graphic novels) 020 7531 8584

I FEEL GOOD LTD, 9 Dollington Street, London EC1V 0BQ (Viz) 020 7687 7000

JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 (albums) 020 7381 6007

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour and underground comix, graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TM2 5UJ (humour and adventure titles, Marvel licensed)
01892 500 100

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX11QN (Judge Dredd Magazine and 2000 AD)
01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licensed titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comic magazines, books and graphic novels)
0161 833 2664

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics)
020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)
(0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 66 rue Bonaparte, 75006, Paris (albums and manga)
(0033) 1 40 51 28 00

DARGAUD, 6 rue Gager Gabillot, 75015 Paris (albums and manga)
(0033) 1 40 45 35 39

DEL COURT, 5 passage du Mont-Cenis, 75018 Paris (albums and comics)
(0033) 1 53 41 86 10

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums)
(0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy les Moulineaux (albums and manga) (0033) 1 41 46 11 11

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licensed Japanese manga) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 24 avenue Philippe Auguste, 75011 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 44 93 88 33

MARVEL, BP 62, 06702 St Laurent Duvar (0033) 1 92 12 57 57

SEMIC FRANCE, 45 rue Broca, 75005 Paris (licensed comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 36 32 00

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)
(0039) 02 96480403

MARVEL ITALIA, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Marvel licensed titles)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavana, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed) fax: (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga)

ASTORINA S.R.L., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORIAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums)
0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums)
0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums)
0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s = wholesale available
dis = bulk discount terms
cat = phone/write for catalogue
s-cat = sae for catalogue
wants = wants lists accepted
s-wants = sae with wants lists

CoBRA = Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc = major credit cards accepted
sae = send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through *Detective Comics* #225 (intro-ducting the Martian Manhunter) and *Showcase* #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd,

Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc) **Quicksilver Comics**, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970 to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) formerly *Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found

through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat cc) 020 7497 2150

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) formerly *Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this

area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist) 020 8325 9507

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and Gear for Games (FPI) Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) formerly *Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail

Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat)

020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and Gear for Games (FPI) Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (*Fantagraphics*, *Maus*, *Crumb*, *Pekar*...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 (\$6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a 6-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/\$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: Listings@comicsinternational.com

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. (Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) **General announcements:** Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) £5.00 (\$7.50 US)
(ii) **List ads:** (including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) £10.00 (\$15.00 US)

Payment (to Comics International) must accompany advertising copy.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Half-price sale: Many thousands of Marvel, DC and indies, all at half price. For your full list send an sae to M. Cruden, 18 Backbower Lane, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 5NS, or phone 0161 366 8226. E-mail mcruden@btinternet.com, or log on to <http://members.lycos.co.uk/mcruden> to see full lists of comics for sale.

Huge **2000 AD** collection for sale: Over 1000 issues from Prog 1, annuals, specials, **Crisis**, **Starlords** and **Judge Dredd** Magazines. Send an sae to David Thomas, 25 Caspian Way, Dartford, Kent DA10 0LB.

For sale: Drinking glasses, including three different designs of **Batman** (1967) - £75 each pp; six different **Flintstones** glasses (1960s) - £25 each pp. Japanese comics from the 1980s: 58 issues in vg+ condition - £100 pp. **The Lone Ranger** (1969, US) small-sized 16-page in mint condition - £25. **Marvel Masterworks** 11 (X-Men) mint - £45. **Dan Dare** (Hawke) volume 2 - £100; volume 8, 9 and 11 all mint - £75 each. **Charlie Brown: Christmas is Together Time** (1966, US hardcover) vg/fine - £30. **Snoopy and His Sopwith Camel** (1969, US paperback) vg - £15. **Titbits** 1920 two copies; 1938 one copy; 1939 four copies; 1940 one copy - all for £40. **Men Only** September 1943 - £20. **US Zine Comics Buyers' Guide Complete Year** 1983 - £150 pp. Contact: John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland, 1015 LW.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that **Wanted ads** must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **Action - The Story**

of a **Violent Comic** and any **Action and Battle Picture Weekly** issues/annuals/other items. Also need various **Strontium Dog** and **Rogue Trooper** Fleetway/Quality issues and **Amazing Spider-Man** Volume 1 #120 and 300. Items bought or swapped from my extensive collection. Contact: Dermot MacLennan, 58 Bushmills Road, Coleraine, County Londonderry BT52 2BP. Tel: 0775 243 4935

Wanted: **Superman, Superboy** and **Batman** British annuals from the 1950s and 1960s; **Jack and Jill: All Colour Gift Book** 1953; **T.V. Comic** weeklies and holiday specials from the 1960s and 1970s. Gold Key: **Banana Splits** and **H.R. Pufnstuf, Bewitched**. **Archie**: 80-Page Giants 1953. Pin-up mags: **Kamera**, **Beautiful Brittons**, **Q.T. Spick**, etc. Any **Bettie Page** material. Write to John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland, 1015 LW.

Original artwork wanted: Dan Dare, Gerry Anderson, Dr Who, Daleks (Eagle, TV Comic, TV21, Countdown, TV Action, annuals, videos, Target books - especially **Achilleos**). Also **Trigan Empire**, **Jane, Garth, Tiger Tim, Marvelman**, **Captain Britain** and **Roy of the Rovers**. Contact Steve on 07803 556926 (6 to 8pm) or e-mail lawstephen@hotmail.com (including 'art' in the subject line).

I am back! Get me these trade paperbacks if you want to live: **Silver Surfer: Return of Thanos**, **Onslaught Book 1**, **Iron Man vs Dr Doom**, **Fantastic Four: Heroes Return**. Please contact the once and future Steve Overton, 54 Birling Avenue, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent ME14 4LN. Tel: 01622 739082 or e-mail teveoverton@aol.com. Hasta la vista!

Looking for the following graphic novels published by Titan: **The**

Chronicles of Judge Dredd. There were 30 titles, so if anyone can help me complete my collection either call Rob Cox on 01279 831810 or e-mail robert.cox805@ntlworld.co.uk

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

A wandering cat discovers its purpose in life is to protect a fallen meteor from a black hole in **Existential Cat** 1. Mock 18th century poetic narrative is further proof that this creator did no market research. 32 pages. £1 (including p&p) from Chris, 51 Moss Street, York YO23 1BR.

The Comics Advertiser, with all the latest small press comics and an article by Rik Hoskin, is free! Available now from all good comics retailers, or for an A4 sae from CAOF Comics, 10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall, Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH. Go demand your free copy now!

Attention, small press creators! Listen up, comics fans! Britain's breeziest booze-up is coming! The second Saturday of each month at The London Pub near The Bedford Hotel, Bedford Way*, London (nearest tube station: Russell Square). From 2pm onwards. For details, please contact Lee Davis on 07951 912721. (* Hey! The spirit of UKCAC lives on!)

Bionic Benny and His Bounding Bubos 1! To celebrate five years of lawsuit-free comics, Bionic Comics is re-releasing its epic-ish **Bionic Benny** 1. Be the first to jump on the second bandwagon! Send two first class stamps to Peter, 94 Tippet Rise, Reading RG2 0DZ. E-mail: bioniccomics@hotmail.com.

UK Planet of the Apes fanzine, **Simian Scrolls** 7 now out! With features on the Planet of the Apes animated series, an interview with Austin Stoker and an exclusive look at Ape modelling. Available from John Roche, Mediation House, 18 Meyrick Street, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire, Wales SA72 6UT at £2 (including postage & packing). E-mail: mail@mediationhouse.com

Lazy Robots. Trundle, Toggle and Tweeter are three robots who live on the grim factory world of the Metal Moon. When Trundle is hurt in an accident, it's time to take a break. Where else but the beautiful

planet of Beach Ball, with its tropical seaside sun? But the villainous Springer has escaped Springer has escaped justice, and is hiding from the Coast Cops. When Trundle is mistaken for Springer there's trouble on his tail. Fun science fiction for children (and adults!) by Peter Poole. Sample and buy from www.nospine.com.

The Lord of the Rings, a 40-page critical appreciation of Tolkien's masterpiece, written by Mike Cruden, with full-page illustrations by Tony Schofield. £1 including p&p from Mike Cruden, 18 Backbower Lane, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 5NS.

Warren Fanzine: **Spooky.** A new 12-page fanzine, featuring Creepy, Eerie, Vampirella and more! £1.25 including UK postage. Piers Casimir, 14 Burton Close, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8LU. E-Mail: piers@spookyfanzine.com

Calling London-based comics artists. Interested in sharing studio space? With a group of four to five, expect reasonable rates - around £120 per month each. Contact Roger Mason on 020 7608 3638 or e-mail rogermaso.n@virgin.net.

We've gone summer crazy at North London Comics! Send your name and address, and get free issues of **Mondo** in return! Yes, free - while stocks last! Babes, retro fun, British superheroes, sci-fi action and a top letters page! Cor! Contact Lee Davis, 140 Amersham Avenue, Edmonton, London N18 1DY. **Mondo** - try it!

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly - The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £17 per year (cheques should be made payable to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to the membership secretary: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. Or e-mail: Richard.Sheaf@uk.nestle.com

Comics Creators Guild: The Future of Comics in our Hands. Industry veterans and aspiring professionals. Join the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, Comics Forum, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further information please contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

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It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's Classified section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine for both dealers and fans, **Classified** offers you the opportunity to add a part time job to boost your finances.

Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

... It's down to you!

Comic & Card Events

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE

**ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1**

The National Gallery



**ADMISSION
FREE**

○ 2003 ○
**SUNDAY
OCTOBER
5**

**DOORS OPEN
12 NOON**

**2000 AD
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BABYLON 5
BEANIE BABIES
BRITISH COMICS
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GAMING CARDS
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ORIGINAL ARTWORK
POSTERS
SILVER AGE COMICS
SPORTS CARDS
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STAR TREK
STAR WARS
TOYS
TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
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**HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place.
UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. BRITISH RAIL:
Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.**

FUTURE DATE: 26TH OCTOBER 2003

DEALERS: CALL 020 747 66 873 FOR TABLE AVAILABILITY

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

September

- 6/9 Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road (p48)
- 13/9 Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p48)
- 20/9 Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham (p48)
- 20/9 Glasgow:** Scottish Comics, Card & Collectables Fair, James Moir Hall (Mitchell Theatre) Granville Street (p20)
- 21/9 London:** The London ABC Show, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, Russel Square (p20)
- 27/9 Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester (p48)
- 28/9 Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool (p48)

October

- 4/10 Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham (p48)
- 5/10 London:** The National Comicbook Marketplace and Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way (p58)
- 11/10 Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street (p48)
- 25/10 Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road (p48)
- 26/10 London:** The National Comicbook Marketplace and Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way (p58)

November

- 1/11 Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p48)
- 1/11 London:** Comic Festival with special guests, Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury (p4)
- 8/11 Glasgow:** Scottish Comics, Card & Collectables Fair, James Moir Hall (Mitchell Theatre) Granville Street (p20)
- 15/11 Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham (p48)
- 22/11 Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester (p48)
- 23/11 Liverpool:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool (p48)
- 29-30/11 Birmingham:** Memorabilia '03, Birmingham NEC (p36)

December

- 6/12 Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds (p48)
- 13/12 Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road (p48)
- 13/12 Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham (p48)

January

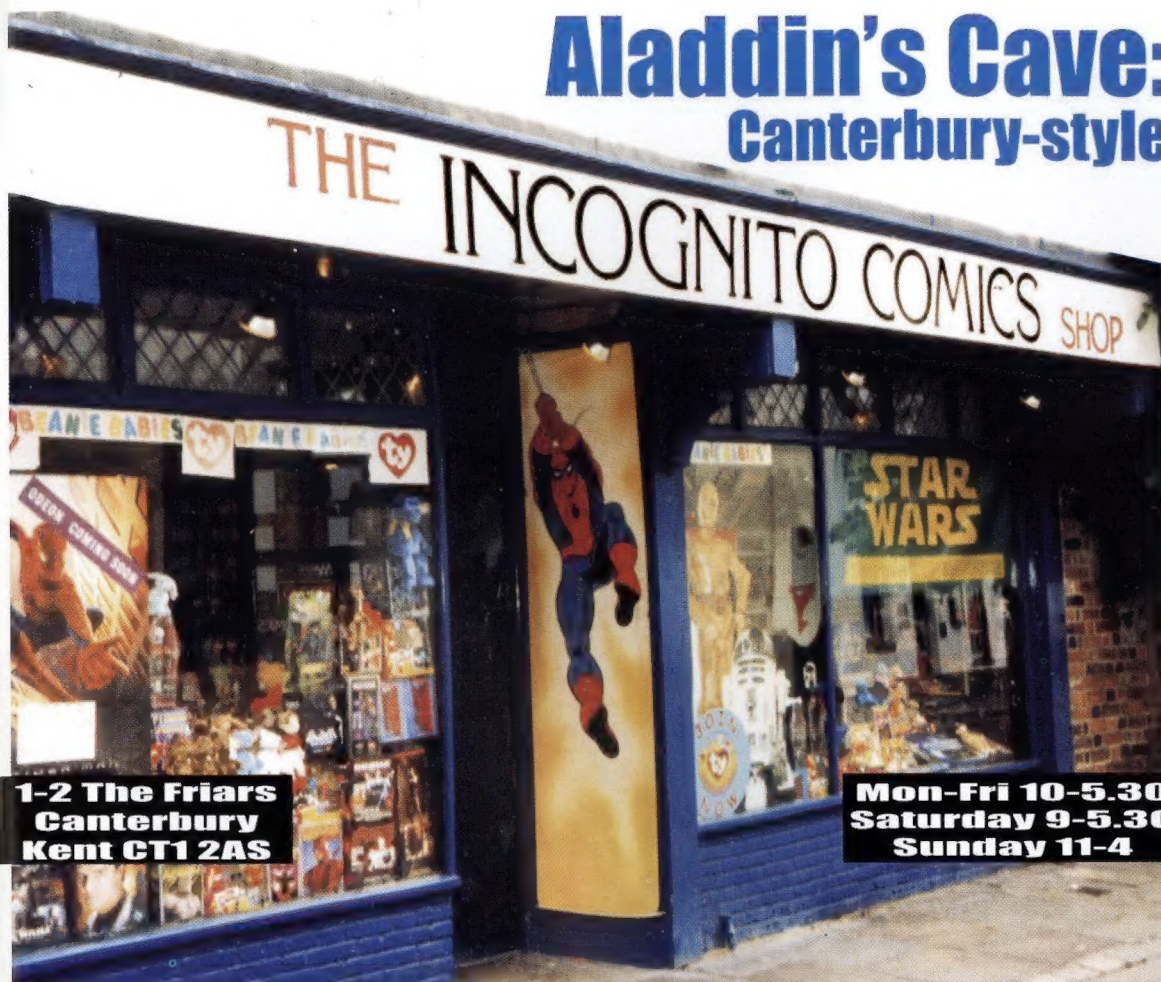
- 11/1 London:** Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (p58)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

**LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COMICS-RELATED
EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD? SEE OUR
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE ON PAGE 58.**

**ON THE NET? THEN CHECK OUR WEBSITE INDEX
WITH EVENT ORGANISER WEB ADDRESSES. SEE PAGE 55**

Aladdin's Cave: Canterbury-style



**1-2 The Friars
Canterbury
Kent CT1 2AS**

**Mon-Fri 10-5.30
Saturday 9-5.30
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- **Previews Contests** — Compete with your fellow fans for cool prizes!
- **The Previews Gallery** — Let the world discover your comics art here!

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